

# DIVINES

Egyptian, Greek and Roman sculptures



Galerie Chenel



Hieroglyphic text on a narrow strip, likely a fragment of a larger inscription. The text is arranged in three columns, reading from right to left. The symbols include various birds (e.g., falcons, ibis), human figures, and other standard hieroglyphs. The strip is dark and appears to be made of a material like wood or stone, with the hieroglyphs carved into its surface.



DIVINES

MMXXV





There are fragments of eternity wherein the divine permeates matter, linking the celestial to the harmonious, the eternal to the invisible. These works embody that dual presence: those of the ancient gods, majestic and intangible, and those more subtle, which, by their classic and incomparable beauty, touch the divine.

The sublime head of a young man wearing a laurel wreath reflects that transcendental aesthetic. His gentle, idealised features capture a timeless serenity, between human glory and immortal virtues. The symbol of victory consecrates this figure, both human and divine, which seems to challenge time itself.

Opposite him stands Artemis of Ephesus, majestic and enigmatic, like an offering to life. Her many breasts symbolise a cosmic, bountiful fertility. As the goddess of nature and invisible forces, she carries within her the mystery of a world governed by harmony and sacred power. Her static figure imposes a protective presence, connecting the Earth with the celestial spheres.

Next to her, the dazzling Egyptian bust of a governor exemplifies an authority imbued with an almost sidereal gravitas. The fine hieroglyphs engraved on its back murmur ancient secrets. More sensual, a marble masculine torso radiates a vibrant beauty, the eternal residing in the perfection of the sculpted body. A fascinating marble plaque with chiselled inscriptions divulges a sacred memory, while a votive altar adorned with bucrania plunges us into a world of ceremonial rites. The Hellenistic bronze of a warrior, with an illustrious provenance, straining with strength, exalts courage turned divine vertigo.

Thank you to Olivier, Florent, Jörg and all those, relatives and friends, who, through their insights and presence, exhaled upon this collection the divine breeze of an infinite inspiration.





# LEFT FOOT

ROMAN, 1<sup>ST</sup> – 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY AD

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 22 CM.

WIDTH: 15.5 CM.

DEPTH: 13 CM.

PROVENANCE:

FORMERLY IN THE COLLECTION OF HENRY BOUCHER (1847–1927),

MINISTER UNDER FÉLIX FAURE.

THEN PASSED DOWN BY DESCENT UNTIL 2024.

This marble fragment represents a left foot wearing a finely executed sandal.

The sculpture reveals a great knowledge of anatomy through its detailed toes, particularly the big toe, which is slightly separated from the rest of the foot. Incisions were made on each toe to emphasise the nails, demonstrating the sculptor’s attachment to realism. The sandal is richly decorated, with a ring atop the foot at the centre of a lattice of interlaced straps that firmly support the foot. The straps twine around the ring and support the foot through their attachment to the sole, which is slightly elevated, indicating a sophisticated type of shoe. Some straps go between the first two toes, while the fourth toe is completely enveloped.

There were several categories of Roman sandals, and our fragment could correspond to either of two distinct types: the *solea* or the *carbatina*. The *solea* was a light sandal composed of a flat leather sole supported by straps that passed over the foot and sometimes ran between the toes. While the classic version was intended for a domestic or civil use, there were more elaborate variants characterised by a lattice of refined straps, sometimes decorated with incised motifs or metallic elements. These sandals were often worn by the elite in formal or ceremonial settings. Their open structure left much of the foot visible, which seems to correspond to the characteristics of our foot. On the other hand, the *carbatina* was made of a single piece of leather



that was perforated and laced onto the foot. More enclosed and thus offering more protection, it was generally worn by modest classes and by those who could not afford more sophisticated shoes such as the *calceus*, an enclosed half-boot. The fact our foot is mostly bare seems to exclude the hypothesis that the shoe is a *carbatina*. The foot thus probably belonged to a person of high rank wearing an elaborate *solea*. Our sculpted fragment was probably part of a monumental statue representing a deity, an emperor or a Roman high official. The fineness of the work and the attention to detail suggest that it was a prestigious order, perhaps destined for a public building, a sanctuary or a ceremonial space.

Similar fragments are preserved in the collections of several prestigious museums. A noteworthy example can be found at the British Museum, where a similar sculpted foot presents a richly adorned sandal with decorative straps (Ill. 1).



Ill.1. Fragment of a foot, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 48.26 cm. British Museum, London. inv. no. 1784.0131.5.



Ill.2. The Lanuvium Rider Group, fragment of a left foot, Roman, 75-50 BC, marble, H.: 19 cm. British Museum, London. inv. no. 1918.0101.154

This colossal foot was once part of a statue several times larger than life, a format exclusively reserved for representations of deities and emperors. This foot is wearing a sandal of an elaborate Greek type, first seen in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, which has several commonalities with our shoe. Another relevant example is the Lanuvium Rider Group fragment of a foot, dating from 75-50 BC (Ill. 2). The open structure and the arrangement of the straps are also strongly reminiscent of our fragment. There is another important example at the Leeds City Museum (Ill. 3). Finally, we note that this type of sandal was already popular in ancient Greece, as the motif was repurposed to turn it into an aryballos, or Greek vase (Ill. 4).



Ill.3. Sculpted foot wearing a sandal, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble. Leeds Museums and Art Galleries (Leeds City Museum), United Kingdom.

Ill.4. Aryballos, Greek, archaic period, clay, H.: 8.3 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. inv. no. MNB 1713





Our fragment of a foot is from the collection of Henry Boucher (1847-1927), a French politician who occupied ministerial positions under President Félix Faure (Ill. 5). As a great art enthusiast and a discerning collector, Henry Boucher accumulated a first-class collection of ancient sculptures, some of which were dispersed following his death.



Ill.5. Portrait of Henry Boucher (1847-1927).







# TORSO OF APHRODITE

ROMAN, 1<sup>ST</sup> - 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY AD

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 16 CM.	WIDTH: 16 CM.	DEPTH: 8 CM.
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PROVENANCE:

FORMER GERMAN PRIVATE COLLECTION OF HANS STAHL FOR AROUND 40 YEARS  
UNTIL HIS DEATH IN DECEMBER 2023, IN TOESTORF MANOR, OERSBERG, GERMANY.  
BY INHERITANCE TO HIS WIDOW, MRS JOHANNA STAHL.

This feminine torso, dating from between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, is an ideal representation of the feminine body. Carved from a crystalline beige marble, it displays harmonious shapes and delicate sculpting: the breasts are full and round and the well-proportioned shoulders give the piece an impression of elegance and grace. There is a gentle transition from chest to waist, accompanied by a subtle twist of the body towards the left, which suggests a slight *contrapposto*. This classical posture, inherited from Greek statuary, introduces movement to the composition while imbuing our sculpture with a certain flexibility. The position of the bust suggests a dynamic posture: the right arm, initially raised, contrasted with the lowered

left arm, creating an effect of movement. From the characteristics of our small feminine torso – its proportions, position and movement – we recognise the Aphrodite Anadyomene model.

The surface of our work displays visible traces of polishing, which attest to the care taken with its execution, and a patina that has accumulated over time, imbuing the work with additional historical depth. Far from being a mere anatomical representation, this torso was meant to express a certain sensuality, each curve being designed to imitate the softness and vitality of skin. In Roman antiquity, this type of sculpture was often associated with mythological, allegorical and



honorific figures. The posture of this body, with one arm raised and the other lowered, evokes a bathing scene or an unveiling gesture, characteristic of representations of Venus. As the goddess of love and beauty, she was among the privileged subjects of imperial statuary, adorning the luxurious villas of the elite, thermal baths, gardens and sanctuaries alike. Our torso presents similarities with two sculptures preserved at the Louvre (Ill. 1–2). Like our piece, these works demonstrate careful sculpting and a subtle balance of proportions, although their postures differ slightly. Other representations of Venus that display postures closer to that of our statue can be viewed at the J. Paul Getty Museum (Ill. 3) and Metropolitan Museum of Art (Ill. 4). In these examples, the goddess' arms are in similar positions, reinforcing the illusion of movement and showcasing the delicate moment of the unveiling.



Ill.1. Aphrodite, Roman imperial period, 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 35 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.  
Ill.2. Aphrodite, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 13,5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Ill. 3. Statue of Venus (Aphrodite Anadyomene type), Roman, 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, marble, H.: 25 cm. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.  
Ill.4. Statuette of Aphrodite Anadyomene, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 42.6 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

This torso has a prestigious provenance, having belonged to the German collector Hans Stahl (Ill. 5) for nearly 40 years. Preserved in his manor of Toestorf in Oersberg (Ill. 6), this piece traversed the centuries before joining his collection. His acquisition of the work attests to art connoisseurs' constant fascination for ancient masterpieces. After his death in December 2023, the work was left to his wife, Mrs Johanna Stahl, thereby continuing its history within a private collection.



Ill.5 Portrait of Hans Stahl (1954–2023).



Ill.6 Room 8 of Toestorf manor, Oersberg.











# TORSO OF DIONYSUS

ROMAN, CIRCA 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY AD

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 47 CM.

WIDTH: 20 CM.

DEPTH: 16 CM.

PROVENANCE:

IN A EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION SINCE THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY,  
JUDGING FROM THE RESTORATION TECHNIQUES.

THEN IN THE PARISIAN PRIVATE COLLECTION OF ALEXANDER IOLAS (1908–1987),  
ACQUIRED ON THE PARISIAN ART MARKET IN THE 1960S OR 1970S.

THEN IN THE PARISIAN PRIVATE COLLECTION OF ANDRÉ MOURGUES,  
GIFTED BY THE FORMER.

Sculpted from a gorgeous white marble, this elegant torso represents the young god Dionysus, standing. The weight of his body rests entirely on his right leg, while his left is significantly bent, creating a position of the body known as *contrapposto*. This position creates a subtle movement by which the pelvis is slightly tilted, in contrast with the line of the shoulders, while the back is curved. The movement of the body thus forms an ‘S’, emphasising the full tension of the muscles. His subtly muscled shoulders are covered with long strands of wavy hair, characteristic of the god’s typical hairstyle. His

pectorals, only slightly salient, betray the youth of our Dionysus, as does his stomach with its finely etched abdominals, the centre of which is marked with a delicately sculpted navel. His obliques, highlighted by a delicate line, go down towards his genitals, which are partly covered by a piece of fabric. Our young god is wearing a thick *chlamys*, which passes over his left shoulder and goes down his back and over his legs, leaving his right knee and tibia bare. The deeply sculpted folds suggest movement and give an impression of volume. Our torso is sculpted from fine-grained marble marked



with a delicate ancient patina, the hue of which recalls the colour of skin. The fine material lent itself to subtle, detailed work, particularly with regard to the drapery.

Dionysus, called Bacchus by the Romans, was the son of Zeus and the mortal Semele. In a fit of jealousy, Zeus' wife, Hera, killed Semele, who was then pregnant with the young Dionysus. Zeus saved his son by sewing him into his thigh until his gestation was complete. Once he was born, Hermes took Dionysus to be raised by the bacchantes and maenads. Dionysus is one of the best-known deities of the ancient world, associated with vines and wine, excess and the wilderness. He is commonly represented in various guises, either surrounded by his companions in the famous procession of Dionysus, which included wild animals such as panthers and leopards, or in heroic nudity, sometimes partly covered with a thick drapery, as in our lovely example.



Ill. 1. Torso of a young Dionysus, Roman, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 40.5 cm. Private collection.  
Ill. 2. Torso of Apollo, Roman, 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, marble. Archaeological Museum of Messara, Heraklion.  
Ill. 3. Statue of Dionysus, Roman, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 185 cm. British Museum, London, inv. no. 1861,0725.2.  
Ill. 4. Statue of Poseidon, Roman, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

This iconography is quite rare and there are few similar examples. Some are in private collections (Ill. 1) or museums across the globe (Ill. 2, 3). The *contrapposto* that distinguishes our sculpture, and which can be found in comparative examples, enabled artists to showcase their dexterity in crafting the shapes of the body. This very position, with a bent left leg, characterises another model, a representation of Poseidon, God of the sea (Ill. 4).



Ill. 5. Alexander Iolas (1908-1987).  
Ill. 6. André Mourgues, by Andy Warhol, March 1972.

This superb torso probably belonged to a European private collector in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as shown by the restoration techniques used. It later became part of the collection of the Graeco-American art collector and trader Alexander Iolas (1908-1987 - Ill. 5) in the 1960s or 1970s. Some years later, he gifted it to André Mourgues (Ill. 6), his associate and life partner. Born in Egypt, Iolas was a passionate collector of Greek and Egyptian antiquities and modern art. He was the director of the Hugo Gallery in New York from 1945 to 1955 and later opened his own gallery in Paris. He was one of the first gallerists to showcase artists such as Andy Warhol, Max Ernst and René Magritte, to name but a few.











# RED-FIGURE AMPHORA

GREEK, ATTIC, CIRCA 450 BC

POTTERY

HEIGHT: 34 CM.

WIDTH: 18 CM.

DEPTH: 18 CM.

PROVENANCE:

FORMERLY IN THE COLLECTION OF ALESSANDRO CASTELLANI (1823–1883).

SOLD AT DROUOT, 4 APRIL 1866, LOT 61.

SOLD AT DROUOT, FEATURED IN *THE ANTIQUITÉS ET MÉDAILLES [...]*, SALES CATALOGUE,  
26 FEBRUARY 1868, LOT 24.

THEN IN A FRENCH PRIVATE COLLECTION, JUDGING FROM THE HANDWRITTEN LABEL  
ON THE UNDERSIDE OF THE FOOT.

IN THE COLLECTION OF A COMMISSARY OF THE FRENCH NAVY,  
ACQUIRED BEFORE THE 1970S OR 1980S.

THEN PASSED DOWN BY DESCENT UNTIL 2024.

This amphora has an elegant shape with a wide, tapered neck, vertical, curved handles and a relatively narrow foot. The red figures composing the decorative scene on each side of the vase stand out against the shiny, black background. On the main side, a feminine figure is represented standing on a frieze of Greek frets, turned towards the left. Her head, however, is turned in the opposite direction. Her face, completely in profile, is characterised by

details painted in black: a straight eyebrow formed by a simple line, an almond-shaped eye with a round, black pupil in the centre and a long, straight nose accompanied by a small line that represents its left wing. Her protruding chin is rather large. Her thick hair is pulled back into a chignon, represented by a black mass outlined in red, and adorned with a band, also represented by an orange-hued line – the natural colour of the clay. This feminine figure



is wearing a peplos, a woollen garment typically worn by women in ancient Greece. A peplos was a pleated tunic. Here, the pleats are represented by long, vertical lines that run parallel to each other. She is wearing a draped mantle over the top, which covers her left shoulder and arm. The detailed folds stand out in black, rendered with a brush, but for the mantle, they follow the shape of the woman's body and are not as regular. In her left hand, she is holding a thyrsus, a staff associated with the cult of Dionysus that was covered in ivy leaves or topped with a pine cone. Here, the pine cone is represented by an ovoid shape marked with black dots. In her right hand, she is holding a phiale – a round, shallow libation bowl – that is angled downwards, spilling the wine she is offering, represented by a purplish red line. This extra colour was added with a brush. A crown floats above her, perhaps evoking a ritual or a celebratory scene. This iconography is typical of maenads, the followers and priestesses of Dionysus, who were involved in the god's rites. Her calm, composed attitude contrasts with the livelier representations of maenads in trance states commonly depicted on other vases. On the other side, an older, masculine figure is depicted standing, also on a frieze of Greek frets, turned towards the right. He is bald, completely in profile and draped in a long woollen mantle (a *himation*). Stylistically, his face resembles that of the maenad: a thin line represents his right eyebrow and his elongated eye is rendered simply through an outline with a black pupil in the centre. His long, thin nose surmounts a mouth with full, parted lips. His chin is not visible,

as the folds of his mantle cover the bottom of the face and the neck of our masculine figure. In his left hand, he is holding a stick with a hooked end, which could indicate that he is a traveller, a philosopher, an old man or a god appearing as a human. The identification of this figure is thus uncertain: he could be Hermes, god of travellers and messenger of the gods, or a simple mortal, an elder or a master of ceremonies in a religious context.

This vase, typical of Attic productions, is a superb example of red-figure pottery, which appeared in Athens in around 530 BC and emerged as the dominant technique in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. It then supplanted the black-figure technique, which consisted in painting with a “black glaze” – actually a thin layer of clay painted onto the clay of the vase. During the firing process, this created black motifs against a light background. The red-figure technique worked in reverse, so the dark background was decorated with a brush while the figures composing the scenes were reserved, i.e., left the natural, red-orange colour of the clay. Details were also rendered with a brush, which made it possible to depict the different elements more delicately. The use of a brush resulted in more realistic representation, earning Athens an unrivalled renown across the Greek world. The vases of Attic workshops were thus disseminated beyond continental Greece. This specimen illustrates how skilled the Athenian painters of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC were in the art of red-figure pottery.







Our vase is an amphora, a jar with two vertical handles. In antiquity, amphorae were mainly used to store and transport goods such as wine and olive oil. Our vase is, more precisely, a neck-amphora, characterised by its small, ovoid body, handles that go from the neck to the shoulder and, above all, its clearly defined neck, which is almost detached from the body. Our neck-amphora also belongs to the “Nolan” sub-category, a particularly distinctive type of red-figure amphora that acquired its name following the discovery of several vases of the same type in Nola, in the periphery of Naples. Rather small, they are identifiable by their distinctive high necks and are often exquisitely decorated. Many examples of Nolan amphorae are currently exhibited in museums, including amphorae with similar motifs to ours – figures on friezes of Greek frets. That is particularly the case with vases displaying figures of maenads – generally with a satyr – (Ill. 1–2) and draped masculine figures holding travellers’ sticks (Ill. 3–6).



- Ill. 1. Nolan neck-amphora, Greek, Athens, ca. 470–460 BC, Alkimachos Painter, red-figure pottery, H.: 33.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. G 206.
- Ill. 2. Nolan neck-amphora, Greek, Attic, ca. 445–440 BC, Phiale Painter, red-figure pottery, H.: 34 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, inv. no. De Ridder.375.
- Ill. 3. Nolan neck-amphora, Greek, Attic, ca. 440 BC, Achilles Painter, red-figure pottery, H.: 33 cm. British Museum, London, inv. no. 1856.1226.34.



- Ill. 4. Nolan neck-amphora, Greek, Athens, ca. 470 BC, Charmides Painter, red-figure pottery, H.: 33 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. G 337.

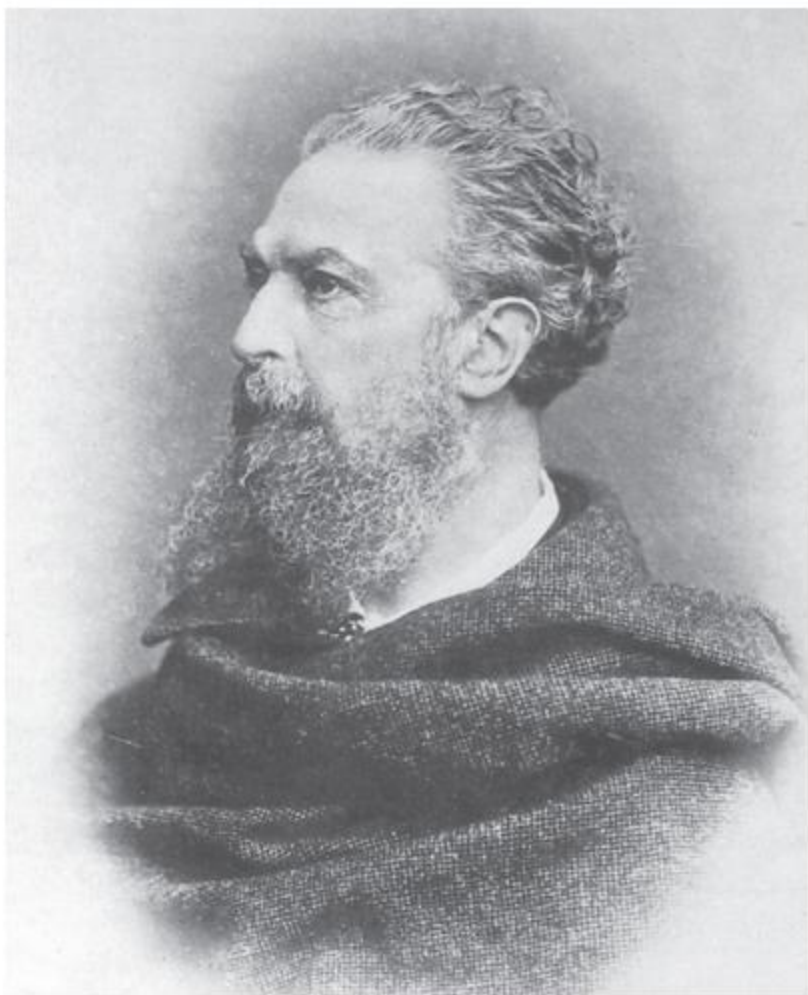


- Ill. 5. Nolan neck-amphora, Greek, Attic, ca. 460–450 BC, Sabouroff Painter, red-figure pottery, H.: 34 cm. British Museum, London, inv. no. 1867.0508.1116.
- Ill. 6. Nolan neck-amphora, Greek, Athens, ca. 450–440 BC, Painter of the Louvre Symposium, red-figure pottery, H.: 28 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. G 377.

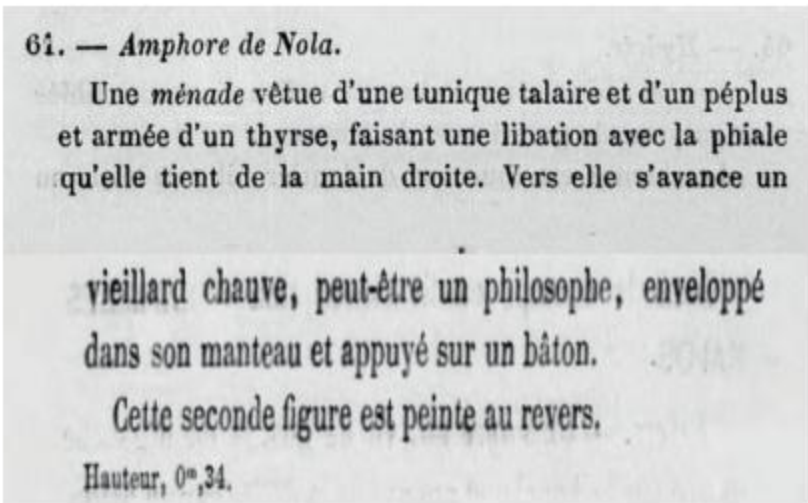
In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this object was part of the prestigious collection of Mr Alessandro Castellani (1823–1883 – Ill. 7), the son of the Roman jeweller Fortunato Pio Castellani, an antiquarian and collector recognised for his interest in Greek pottery. He sought refuge in France, where his undeniable skills as an art dealer and connoisseur made him an important player in the antiquities market in Europe and across the Atlantic. In 1862, he moved to Naples, where he resumed his work as an antiquarian in his residence-cum-shop in Via Chiatamone. He remained there until he returned to Rome for good in 1870. However, he travelled frequently and arranged the auctions of antiquities and artefacts in Drouot at 1866 and 1878



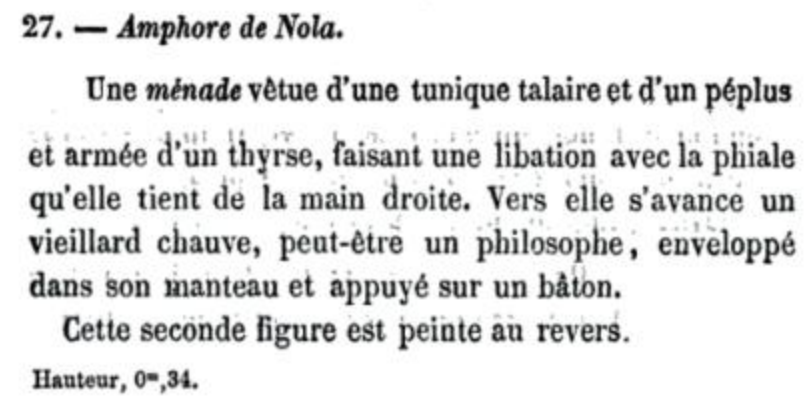
and at Christie, Manson & Woods, in London. He also exhibited antiquities at world's fairs: in London in 1862, Paris in 1855, 1867 and 1878, and Philadelphia in 1876. Our neck-amphora is featured in the Castellani sales catalogue of 4 April 1866 as lot 61, along with a detailed description (Ill. 8). There is also a description of this vase in Notice sur quelques vases peints de la collection M. Alexandre Castellani ("Notice on some painted vases from the Mr Alessandro Castellani collection") published by J. de Witte in 1865 (Ill. 9). The vase reappeared at a Parisian sale on 26 February 1868, as lot 24, and was featured in a catalogue of antiquities and medals on that occasion (Ill. 10). Subsequently, the work was probably in a French private collection, judging from the old label stuck on the underside of its foot, handwritten in ink: "29. Amphore Attique à Fig. rouges (Ve s.)" ("29. Attic red-figure amphora (5<sup>th</sup> c.)."). Then our vase joined the private collection of a former commissary of the French Navy, in which it was photographed with a Polaroid camera in the 1970s or 1980s and described using a typewriter (Ill. 11). The work was then passed down by descent before joining our collections.



Ill. 7. Alessandro Castellani (1823–1883).



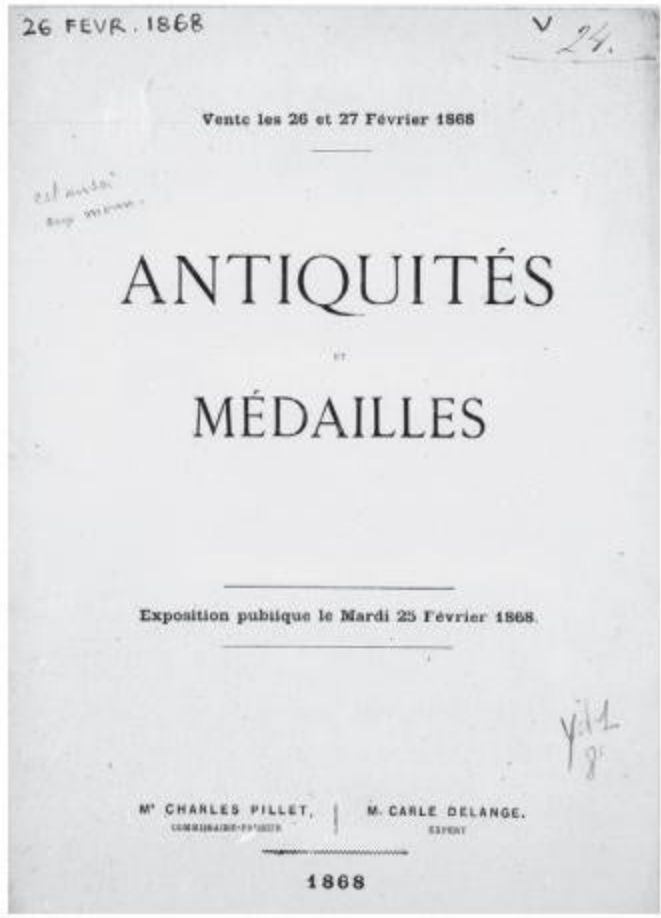
Ill. 8. Catalogue [...] on the collection of Mr Castellani, description of lot 61.



Ill. 9. J. de Witte, Notice sur quelques vases peints de la collection M. Alexandre Castellani, 1865.







28 — Amphore. — Ménade tenant une coupe et un vase.  
Revers. Vieillard drapé appuyé sur un bâton.  
Haut., 34 cent.

Ill. 10. Catalogue of antiquities and medals from M. B...,  
from Naples, 26 February 1868.

Vase attique à figures rouges - Époque du style libre. Après 470 av. J.C. Le peintre de vases à cette époque, a profité des acquisitions techniques du dessin de Polygnote. Il s'en faut de peu que le forme d'un œil de profil soit tout à fait exacte.

Le pied du vase, en recourbi, est correctement rendu. Ce vase serait donc à placer entre 470 et 440 av. J.C.

L'amphore est entièrement recouverte d'un magnifique noir brillant. Les anses sont à des d'âne. Les proportions du vase sont très pures. Le décor est sobre et ne comporte qu'un personnage sur chaque face :

A) Homme entièrement drapé, posé de profil à droite et s'appuyant sur une haste ornée. Les pieds reposent sur une bande ornée d'une grecque.

B) Une ménade, drapée de profil à droite et retournant la tête vers la gauche, tient un thyrsos de la main gauche, pendait que, de la main droite, elle ramène à terre le contour d'une phiale.

Sous les pieds bande ornée d'une grecque. Dans le champ, près de la tête, un objet de cette forme.

Hauteur 0m,340

Ill. 11. Typewritten description of our amphora.







# INSCRIPTION FOR CAIUS AFRANIUS GRAPHICUS

ROMAN, BETWEEN AD 41 AND 70

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 60 CM.

WIDTH: 180 CM.

DEPTH: 5 CM.

## PROVENANCE:

FORMERLY IN THE COLLECTION OF MR MONÉDÉ, DOMAINE DU HALAI, JULY 1882.

THEN IN THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF THE BOUBÉE FAMILY.

SOLD AT AUCTION, BORDEAUX, 18 DECEMBER 2003, LOT 65.

IN THE SWISS PRIVATE COLLECTION OF ART TRADER ALAIN MOATTI (1939–2023).

This imposing rectangular plaque is sculpted from a very fine-grained white marble. Four perfectly straight lines of text are painstakingly inscribed in Latin. The inscription is framed by two relief mouldings and the letters, engraved in a particularly refined manner, attest to a high quality of execution. They are Roman square capitals, also called *capitalis monumentalis*, considered the most refined form of Latin writing. Used by the Romans from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, the script acquired its meticulous

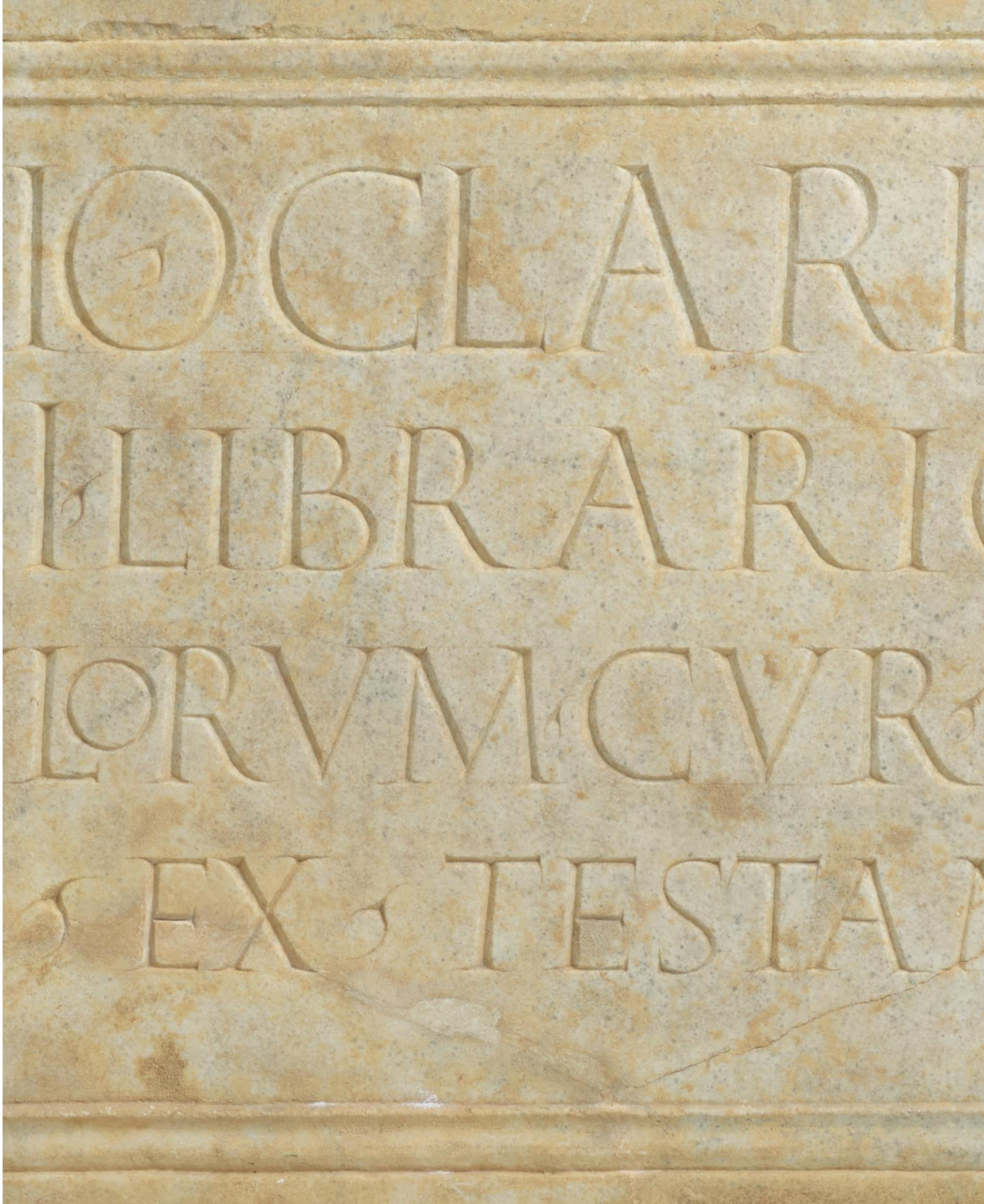
and standardised aspect from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. This style is composed only of capital letters and is characterised by alternating descending strokes (thick strokes) and ascending strokes (thin strokes) and punctuated by triangular serifs. The incised straight lines are balanced out by supple curves, creating a harmonious mixture of letters that are the basis for the modern capital letters we use today. On our fragment, the letters are larger at the top and become progressively smaller. This indicates



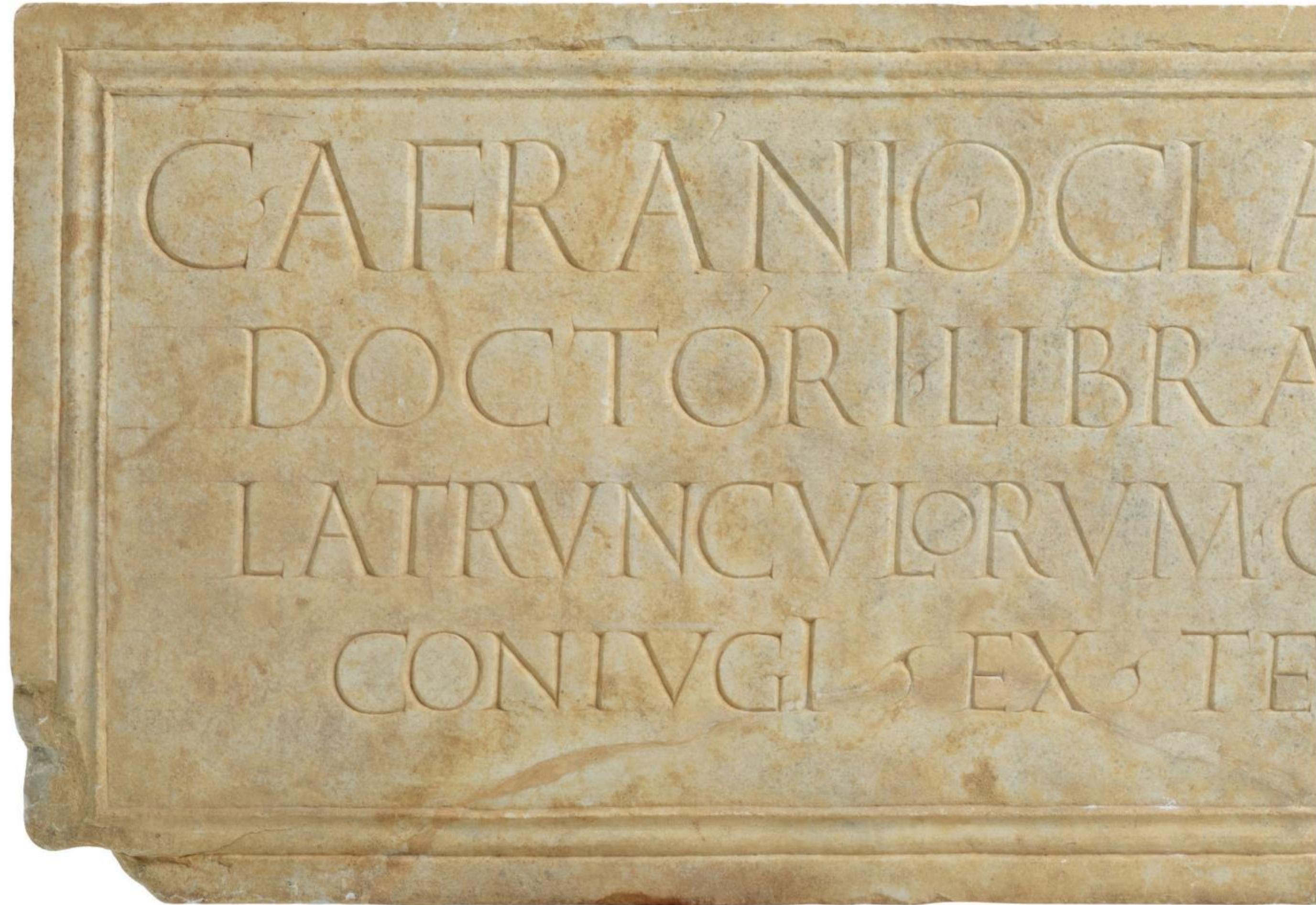
that the plaque was placed high up, as the gradual reduction in the size of the letters creates an optical illusion that makes them appear to be the same size when read from below. The attention to such a detail attest to the degree of graphic sophistication achieved in Rome and the importance Romans attached to such inscriptions. Engraved texts were placed in villas, necropoles and public places, not only to impress citizens with the expertise they demonstrated, but also, and above all, to inform the public. As in the case of our plaque, inscriptions were often used for funerary tombs to commemorate the dead. Detailed information such as the age, profession, family and history of the deceased was included in these epitaphs. Besides these informative details, affectionate messages expressing love, grief and pain for the deceased were included, revealing that intrinsically human way of commemorating the dead. Through these texts, it is possible to know the intimate, personal and professional lives of the dead that once formed Roman society. Our funerary plaque reads as follows:

C • AFRANIO • CLARI • LIB • GRAPHIC°  
DOCTORI • LIBRARIO • LVSORI  
LATRVNCVL°RVM • CVR • C • R • ET •  
TERTVLLAE  
CONVIGI • EX • TESTAMENTO • IPSIVS  
“For Caius Afranius Graphicus, freedman of Caius  
(Afranius) Clarus,  
calligraphy professor, latrunculi player, curator of  
Roman citizens, and for Tertulla his wife, by virtue  
of his own will”.

This inscription offers a glimpse into one of the intimate lives of Roman society. This epitaph was written for Caius Afranius Graphicus and his wife Tertulla. We learn that this man was once a slave and that, at the time of the inscription, he was a freedman of Caius (Afranius) Clarus. Under the Roman Empire, freedmen were known as *liberti* and formed a distinct social class that was granted limited citizenship and rights. It was customary for these freedmen to take the name of their former masters once they became Roman citizens. Slavery was a common practice across the Roman Empire, whereby slaves would perform rural and domestic duties under the supervision of their masters. However, urban slaves could often pursue high-level studies and act as their masters’ agents. Some of these slaves were granted freedom through the legal procedure of manumission, thus becoming “freedmen” in society. Although these men were no longer slaves, they were not considered to be Romans and did not enjoy the same rights as Roman citizens. However, as we find out, Caius Afranius Graphicus became a distinguished member of society. This man was a calligraphy professor, or *librarius* in Latin, and a *latrunculi* player. Latrunculi is a two-player strategy board game that was played in ancient Rome – the ancestor of modern-day chess. It is considered a game of military tactics. More interesting still, Caius Afranius Graphicus was considered as a “curator of Roman citizens”, *curatori civium romanorum*. This was a unique role during the Roman period and not much is now







known about it. The expression appears on another epitaph situated in Lyon, in France (Ill. 1).



Ill. 1. Roman inscription, Roman, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century–3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 134 cm. Lugdunum Museum, Lyon, inv. no. AD 144.

Ill. 2. Necropolis of Portus, Isola Sacra.

However, it is our belief that the title of “curator of Roman citizens” referred to a magistrate responsible for a particular area of public administration within the empire. These curators were often tasked with administrative and social duties in the city. Finally, this inscription was also dedicated to the wife of Caius Afranius Graphicus, Tertulla. She is referred to within a sentimental remark that dedicated the plaque to his wife by his own will, a last act of adoration and reverence for his spouse. The monumental size of this plaque, as well as its symmetry and the flawless execution of its letters, indicates that Caius Afranius Graphicus was an esteemed, highly regarded member of society. Such inscriptions were common in Roman necropoles, placed over tomb doors, as tombs were built like small houses to accommodate the remains of the families laid to rest there (Ill. 2). The purpose of these signs was to inform visitors of the identity of the owner of the monument. Our inscription is thus fully in line with the canonical corpus of funerary

inscriptions of imperial Rome, by its format, the style of writing used and the wording of the dedication. In France, the Lugdunum Museum in Lyon has a large collection of funerary inscriptions and many other large museums house inscriptions from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD that are similar to our model (Ill. 3–4).



Ill. 3. Funerary inscription, Roman, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 68.5 cm. Vatican Museums, Vatican, inv. no. MV.1171.O.O.

Ill. 4. Roman epitaph, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 53.5 cm. British Museum, London, inv. no. 1867.0508.72.

Tombs were designed as monuments to the manes, deities that represented the spirits of the dead. They were the physical sites where commemorative ceremonies were conducted, particularly the Parentalia festival in February, when people took care to honour the tombs of their deceased relatives to appease the manes. In ancient Rome, necropoles were situated outside cities, in their immediate surroundings. They often extended along the roads leading to the city gates. Monuments to the dead served to announce the power and wealth of the city’s population to visitors. Funerary inscriptions are a priceless source of knowledge for the study and understanding of Roman civilisation. They sparked considerable interest following the rediscovery of antiquity by humanists in the Renaissance, and collections of inscriptions were drafted from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.



Our inscription was first documented by Mr de Laurière in the *Bulletin monumental* in 1882, recounting the archaeological discoveries made at the home of Mr Monédé in Halai, near the town of Auch in the south of France (Ill. 5). The funerary plaque was then studied in detail in *La Revue épigraphique du Midi de la France*. The same year, it was featured in an article in *La Revue de Gascogne* written by Adrien Lavergne, in which he detailed the measurements and framing of the plaque before presenting its Latin inscription with a translation. The discovery of our funerary inscription was considered a monumental feat and an extraordinary find, which explains why three publications featured it in the same year (1882). After its discovery, it was acquired by the Boubée family and preserved in their collection until it was sold in Bordeaux in 2003. The plaque then joined the private collection of the art trader Alain Moatti (1939–2023), in Switzerland, where it remained until his death.



Ill. 5. De Laurière, J., *Bulletin monumental*, Vol. X, no. 1, 1882, pp. 369-370.

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# TORSO OF ASCLEPIUS

ROMAN, 1<sup>ST</sup> - 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY AD

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 50 CM.

WIDTH: 25 CM.

DEPTH: 15 CM.

## PROVENANCE:

FORMER COLLECTION OF THOMAS HERBERT, 8<sup>TH</sup> EARL OF PEMBROKE (1656-1733),

WILTON HOUSE, WILTSHIRE.

BY DESCENT TO SIDNEY HERBERT, 16<sup>TH</sup> EARL OF PEMBROKE (1906-1969),

WILTON HOUSE, WILTSHIRE.

PROBABLY SOLD AT AUCTION IN THE 1960S.

PRIVATE COLLECTION, DALLAS, TEXAS UNTIL 2023.

This remarkable Roman sculpture represents Asclepius, the god of medicine and healing, known as Asklepios in Greek mythology. Standing in a noble posture, Asclepius is clothed in a *himation*, a heavy, artfully draped mantle, which was a common feature of representations of the god in antiquity. Carefully arranged, the mantle leaves his chest partly bare, emphasising the harmonious musculature of our Asclepius and his finely sculpted pectorals. The *himation* wraps around his left shoulder, completely envelops his left arm, covers his back and passes under his right arm before curling around his waist.

His left hand, closed in a fist, firmly grasps the fabric in a gesture that amplifies the dynamic tension of the drapery. The folds of the mantle, rendered with great virtuosity, create a subtle play of light and shadow, bestowing upon the sculpture a certain realism and an impression of movement. The fine depiction of the drapery makes it possible to guess at the god's posture under the fabric: his weight rests on his left leg, while his right, slightly bent, introduces a subtle *contrapposto*, bringing balance and movement to the composition. The right arm of our sculpture was probably in a relaxed position



along his body, holding a staff around which a snake was coiled, emblematic of the god of medicine. A slight trace visible on the right side of the drapery seems to confirm this hypothesis. The whole piece is sculpted from a crystalline white marble covered with an ochre patina that attests to the passing of time.

Asclepius was a prominent figure in mythology, worshipped as the god of medicine and healing. As the son of Apollo and the mortal Coronis, he had the power to heal illnesses and bring the dead back to life, thanks to the Gorgon blood offered to him by Athena. That blood had ambivalent properties: that which flowed on the left side was a mortal poison, while that on the right side was a miraculous remedy. However, this power of Asclepius' provoked Zeus' ire, as he saw the other deity as a threat to the natural order. Zeus thus struck Asclepius down with a thunderbolt. He was then deified and worshipped across the Graeco-Roman world.

The cult of Asclepius emerged in Epidauros, in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The sanctuary quickly became the main centre for his adoration, attracting worshippers from all around the Mediterranean. From the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, his cult spread to continental Greece before expanding to the cities of Magna Graecia and beyond. Asclepius was frequently associated with places that already worshipped healing deities such as Apollo. The cult of Asclepius was introduced to Rome in 290 BC following an outbreak of plague. A temple was dedicated to him on Tiber Island. The sanctuaries

dedicated to Asclepius served as places of both worship and healing and those who were ill went there in search of treatments that combined therapeutic practices with religious rituals.

This statue, dating from between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, reflects the importance of Asclepius in the Roman Empire. Representations of the deity abounded in public and religious spaces. The snake coiled around a staff, Asclepius' symbol, signifies regeneration and healing and is still the universal emblem of medicine today. Although the staff is no longer visible on this statue, his posture and the *himation* covering part of his body make it possible to unequivocally identify it as a depiction of the god of medicine.

The collections of the most prestigious museums include many sculptures representing Asclepius. In the Louvre, for instance, two Greek statuettes dating from 350 BC (Ill. 1 and 2) present a posture, bare pectorals and a *himation* with delicately wrought folds that are strongly reminiscent of our work.



Ill.1. London-Eleusis Asclepius, Greek, Attica, 350 BC, marble, H.: 20 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.  
Ill.2. London-Eleusis Asclepius, Greek, Attica, 350 BC, marble, H.: 47 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.







The god continued to be represented under the Roman Empire, as attested by a statue preserved at the Musée Saint-Raymond in Toulouse (Ill. 3), which has similar characteristics to ours: a bare chest with the right arm held along the body and the left arm, positioned on the hip, enveloped in a drapery that hangs down around the pelvis and legs, leaving the feet uncovered. However, our statue belongs more specifically to the *Asklepios Anzio* type, an emblematic work currently preserved within the collections of the Capitoline Museums (Ill. 4).



Ill.3. Statuette of Asclepius, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 53 cm. Musée St-Raymond, Toulouse.

Ill.4. Statue of Asclepius, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, grey marble, after a Greek original. Capitoline Museums, Rome, Italy.

We have traced the history of its provenance back to Thomas Herbert, 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Pembroke (1656–1733), a British statesman and one of the most passionate and eccentric collectors of antiquities of his time. He accumulated one of the largest collections of ancient and modern sculptures in Europe, including more than 150 statues and busts, many of which came from the famous Mazarin collection in Paris, and displayed them at Wilton House (Ill. 5), his family residence in Wiltshire. Our statue of Asclepius was among those treasures, as attested by written works

from the period, particularly that published by Cary Creed in 1731, which described the antiquities of Wilton House in great detail (Ill. 6). It remained in the Herbert family's collection until the 1960s, attesting to the Earl's interest in ancient art and its influence within European aristocracy. Other works, too, mention our sculpture, such as that of James Kennedy, *A Description of the Antiquities and Curiosities in Wilton-House*, written in 1766 (Ill. 7).



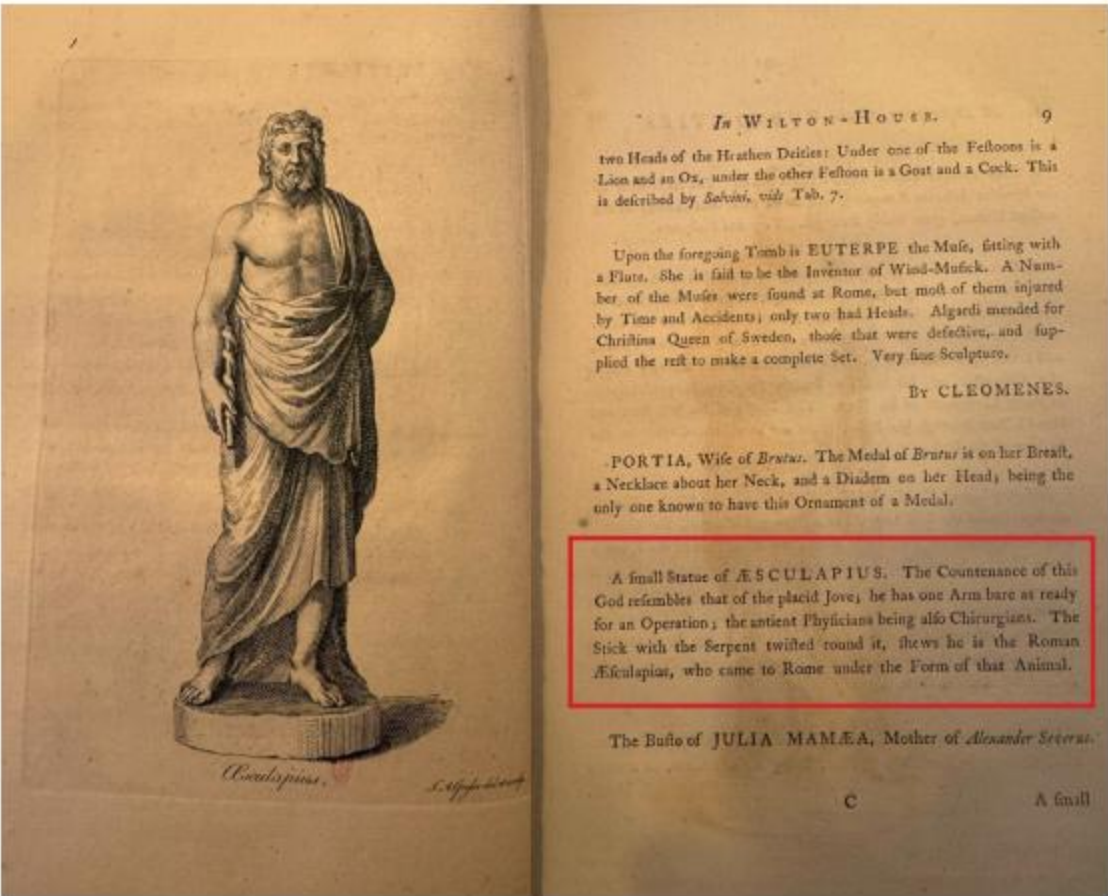
Ill.5. Wilton House, Salisbury, United Kingdom.

In 1850, our statue was also mentioned in the Comte de Clarac's famous work, which listed more than 2,500 antique sculptures preserved within the major museums and various collections of Europe (Ill. 8). Ours is described as belonging to the Pembroke collection. In 1882, Adolf Michaelis (Ill. 9) described the posture of our statue of Asclepius – left hand on his hip – and identified the restorations carried out. Finally, in 2020, a catalogue was published on the entirety of the sculpture collection on display at Wilton House. Our sculpture was very likely sold at auction at the end of the 1960s, before joining a private collection in Dallas, Texas, until 2023.

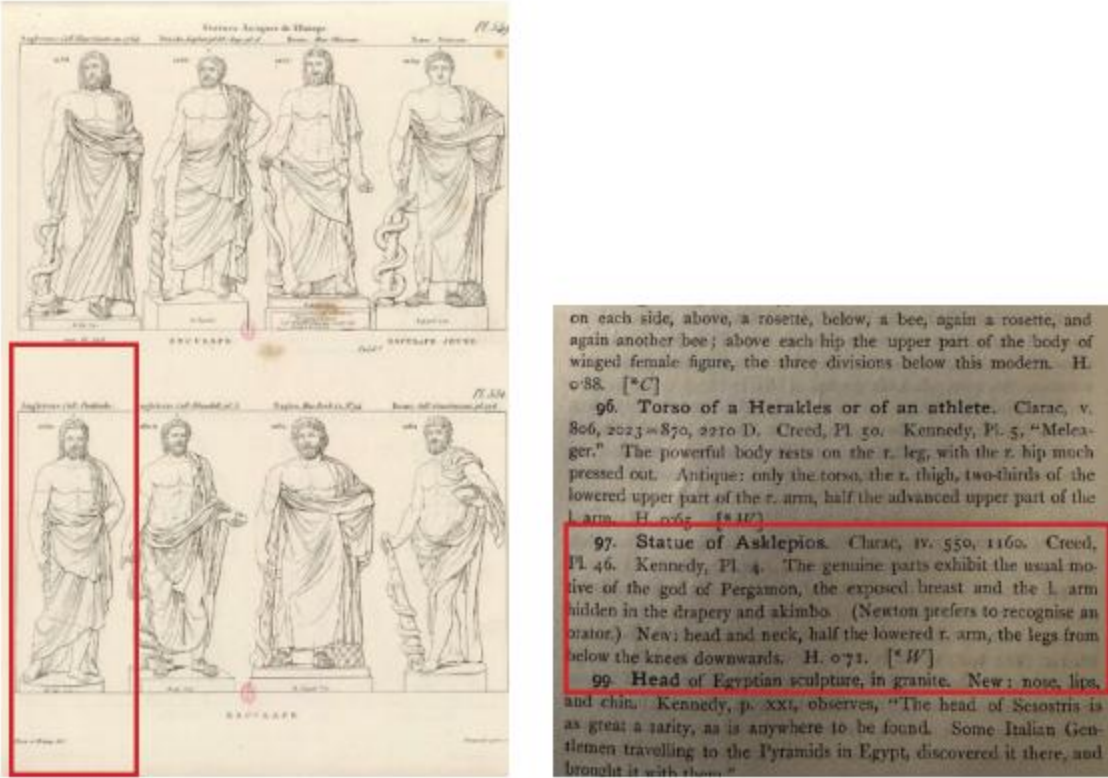




Ill.6. Cary Creed, *The Marble Antiquities*, The Right Hon. The Earl of Pembroke's, at Wilton, [...], 1731, pl. 46



Ill.7. James Kennedy, *A Description of the Antiquities and Curiosities in Wilton-House*, Salisbury, 1769, p. 9, illus.



Ill.8. Comte de Clarac, *Musée de sculpture antique et moderne*, Vol. 4, Paris, 1850, p. 10, no. 1160, pl. 550.

Ill.9. Adolf Michaelis, *Ancient Marbles in Great Britain*, Cambridge, 1882, p. 690, no. 97.

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# VOTIVE ALTAR

ROMAN, 1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY BC

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 74 CM.

DIAMETER: 50 CM.

PROVENANCE:

FORMER EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION SINCE THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

BASED ON THE RESTORATIONS TECHNIQUES.

SAID TO HAVE BEEN FOUND IN THE REGION OF APT, VAUCLUSE.

ACQUIRED FROM LA REINE MARGOT ART GALLERY, PARIS, MAY 1997.

IN THE SWISS PRIVATE COLLECTION OF ART TRADER ALAIN MOATTI (1939–2023).

This large, cylindrical altar is distinguished by its careful composition. A support, reminiscent of the lower part of the shaft of a column, dovetails harmoniously with a base. The whole piece, crafted from white marble, presents a rich relief ornamentation featuring bucrania, festoons of fruit and wreaths – emblematic motifs of the sacrificial iconography of ancient Rome. The relief decoration on the upper part of our altar features three sacrificial bucrania arranged at equal intervals around our sculpture. These skeletal ox heads, which traditionally symbolised sacrifice in the Roman world, demonstrate a meticulously detailed

anatomy. Wide and elongated, each of the fleshless skulls is crowned with two curved horns. Each horn is tied to one end of a festoon of fruit by a knot. A vertical incision runs down the frontal bone of each skull, tracing a sharp juncture between the upper part of the skull and the beginning of the muzzle. An ornamental *infula* delicately adorns the forehead of each animal. *Infulae* were made of flocks of wool dyed red and white, knotted at regular intervals with a ribbon (*vitta*). The arrangement forms a long decorative fillet, which, in Roman tradition, adorned priestesses, Vestal Virgins and sacrificial victims. Here, the fillet falls elegantly on each side of



the muzzle, adding a refined decorative touch while reinforcing the ritualistic, sacred dimension of the composition. The eye sockets, deep and hollow, are carefully sculpted to accentuate the macabre, realistic aspect of the animals' anatomy. Circular in shape, they are marked by three lateral hollows, underlining the contours of the sockets and forming the frontal bones. The lower part of each muzzle represents the maxillary bone, made up of dental alveoli, additional proof of the attention the sculptor paid to the anatomical characteristics of oxen. On either side of each horn streams a ribbon, probably a *taenia*, subliming the upper part of the altar. Lower down, a finely sculpted festoon links the bucrania. Adorned with leaves and fruit – probably pomegranates – it falls from one skeletal head to rise to the next. As for the base on which the cylindrical support, the upper part, now missing, could be imagined as a round table, probably slotted into the support through an ingenious fitting system, typical of Roman funerary altars.

*Bucranium* and wreath motifs originated in the Hellenistic art of Asia Minor and, more precisely, Pergamum, during the reign of the Attalid dynasty (3<sup>rd</sup> century BC). These decorative elements, initially associated with religious and funerary contexts, symbolise festivities and sacrificial rites, immortalised in stone. They often represent wreaths of foliage hanging from supports such as the heads of sacrificed animals, thus establishing a strong link between architecture and sacred rituals. Bucrania, representing the skulls of

sacrificed oxen, are central iconographic elements in such compositions. Often adorned with ribbons (*taeniae*) or wreaths, they symbolise purification and offerings to the gods. The wreaths are shaped with naturalistic precision and are made up of laurel leaves, fruit and flowers, evoking both fertility and prosperity. These motifs were part of an artistic tradition that linked the representation of nature with cult practices. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, these motifs were widely disseminated in the Aegean world and reached their height in the Augustan Age. Integrated into Roman art, they took on a more political and cultural dimension. Cylindrical altars adorned with bucrania and wreaths served both votive and commemorative functions. Placed in sanctuaries and public spaces, they were used for sacrifices and for celebrating religious events. The refined ornamentation, a testament to the excellence of the sculptors, served to amplify the prestige of the patrons and the importance of the rituals the altars facilitated. This cylindrical altar is thus part of a rich artistic and cultic tradition, marking the continuity between Hellenistic heritage and its appropriation by the Romans.

The first examples of this iconography – made up of bucrania, wreaths and festoons of fruit – appeared on the frieze of the façade of the temple *in antis* dedicated to Demeter in Pergamum, built between 302 and 263 BC by Philetærus and Eumenes I of Teos. That frieze, considered the oldest example to feature both wreaths and *infulae* - bedecked bucrania, became a major reference in the history of







the motifs (Ill. 1). In the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, the altars of the Augustan Age cemented the durability of these decorative elements, as attested by the Ara Pacis in Rome (Ill. 2). That monumental altar, built in the honour of Pax, goddess of peace, introduced an opposition as to its function, which was more political than votive. Inside the majestic monument, the decoration features bucrania surrounded with taneia, as well as festoons of fruit, similar motifs to those of our cylindrical altar.



Ill.1. Frieze of the façade of the temple in antis dedicated to Demeter, Greek, between 302 and 263 BC, marble, Pergamum, Turkey.



Ill.2. Ara Pacis, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, marble. Museo dell'Ara Pacis, Rome, Italy.

An altar from the same period, discovered in Mauretania and now preserved at Musée Saint Raymond in Toulouse (Ill. 3), displays a more moderate ornamentation, while still preserving the essence of that Hellenistic decorative tradition. The Roman imperial period also offers noteworthy examples, particularly an altar preserved at the Louvre (Ill. 4). Although the motifs are similar,



Ill.3. Cylindrical altar adorned with animal heads and a laurel wreath, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, marble, H.: 84 cm. Musée Saint-Raymond, Toulouse.  
Ill.4. Altar, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup> century BC–1<sup>st</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 65 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

there are some variations, particularly in its shape. Finally, for an idea of the missing upper part of our sculpture, the example of the votive altar dedicated to the cult of the goddess Feronia, discovered in the sacred site of Lucus Feroniae in Capena, Italy, is particularly enlightening (Ill. 5). Dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, the altar is similar to our object in both shape and decoration, with a base topped with a cylindrical shaft adorned with bucrania and festoons

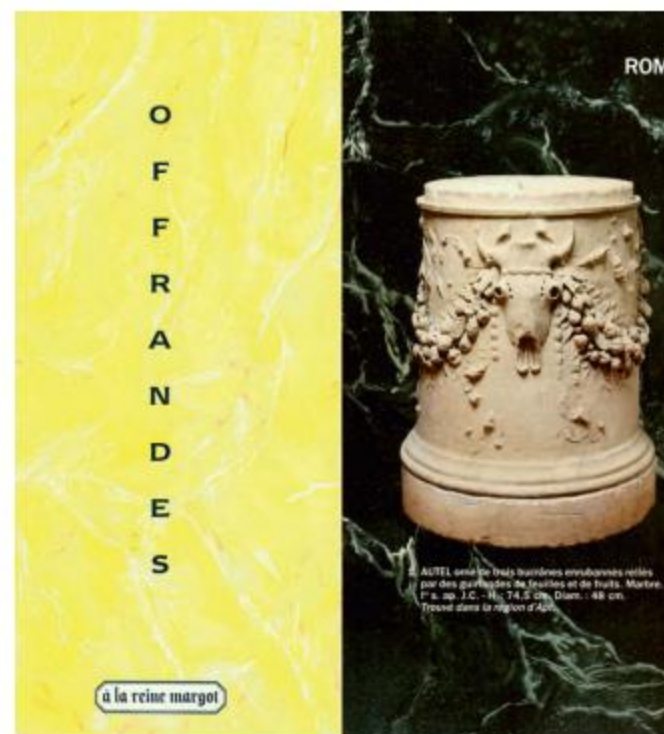


Ill.5. Cylindrical altar of Lucus Feroniae, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, marble. Capena, Rome, Italy.



of fruit. The sanctuary, located near Capena, to the north of Rome, was a major religious centre that gathered various peoples – Latins, Sabines, Etruscans and Falisci – for religious ceremonies and trade.

Our altar was probably found in the region of Apt in Vaucluse. Formerly known as Apt Julia, the region was once a large Roman colony founded in around 45 BC. The town had all the typical features of a Roman city, including temples. It thus seems logical that an altar from that period could come from such a place of worship. In 1880, major archaeological discoveries were made in the area, particularly the “Treasure of Apt”, which consisted of many bronze objects from the Roman period. In 1997, our sculpture was sold to a private collector who acquired it from La Reine Margot (Ill. 6), a Parisian art gallery specialising in archaeological pieces and founded in 1938.



Ill.6. Illustration from the late 1990's from La Reine Margot.







# HEAD OF APOLLO

ROMAN, MIDDLE OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY AD

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 55 CM.

WIDTH: 38 CM.

DEPTH: 40 CM.

## PROVENANCE:

IN A EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION FROM THE 18<sup>TH</sup>-19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY,

JUDGING FROM THE RESTORATION TECHNIQUES.

ACQUIRED BY DEALER PINO DONATI AT THE END OF THE 1960S.

THEN IN A JAPANESE COLLECTION.

IN A SWISS PRIVATE COLLECTION, ACQUIRED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1980S.

PASSED DOWN BY THE FORMER.

This remarkable marble head represents the god Apollo. Created in the Roman period in about the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, it was probably part of an eminent, larger than life statue. The sculpting of the face demonstrates great virtuosity, with its graceful contours, firm, polished flesh and harmonious composition. Depicted from the front, head slightly inclined towards his right, Apollo's attitude seems energetic. This representation conveys a natural grace and a distinct poise, perceptible in the god's fixed gaze. The gentleness of his face expresses a divine serenity and tranquillity,

classic characteristics of representations of Apollo. His finely carved almond shaped eyes are surmounted with delicate eyelids of a remarkable subtlety, marked by deep incisions that extend beneath each brow bone. Those hollows accentuate the relief of his eyelids, while giving his gaze a certain intensity. His brows are not obviously etched, instead, they are suggested by the delicate hollows formed by his upper lids, a detail that, while intangible, only adds to the fineness of the sculpture and attests to the sculptor's talent for representing volumes and subtle transitions between shapes.



Apollo's nose, now missing, was previously restored, as shown by the visible traces of the fracture, which are now smooth. This type of restoration is common in the history of antique sculptures. The mouth of our Apollo, with its delicately parted lips, seems to be frozen in an enigmatic expression, as though about to let out a word or a song. Thin, subtly traced incisions highlight the contours of his cheeks and chin, recalling the careful rendering of his brow. His cheeks thus look full and his chin well-shaped. Our statue's long neck, majestic and impressive, suggests that it belonged to a monumental whole. The marks on its lower part also attest to an old restoration, probably from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Our magnificent head of Apollo is distinguished by refined, meticulously represented hair, a key element of the aesthetic ideal of the Roman imperial period and, more precisely, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Particular attention was paid to his hairstyle, as well as the wavy hair adorning the deity's head. Pulled back in a large knot resting elegantly upon the nape of his neck, our Apollo's hair partly covers his ears. Precisely sculpted with a drill, each lock was carefully carved into the marble, creating a sharp, distinct separation between each one. That detail made it possible to accentuate the volume of Apollo's hair, through a subtle play of light and shadow, which seems to animate it and add greater depth. Apollo's hairstyle is divided into six sections symmetrically arranged on either side of his face, creating a visual harmony that sublimates our head. Finally, the waves of his hair flow seamlessly down from the top of his head in an elegant continuity. At the

back of his head, two missing rectangular features attest to an old restoration that is now missing. A small lead rod located at the back of the sculpture seems to have been added later on, probably in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to place the work against a wall. These technical elements attest to the work's journey through the centuries. On either side of our Apollo's head, a magnificently curly lock tumbles down from behind his ears, framing his face. These particularly detailed locks cascade down his neck and probably came to rest over his shoulders, now missing. The entire hairstyle demonstrates the quest for regularity and geometricity that characterised the art of the imperial period. Finally, the patina on the sculpture, a consequence of the passing of time, confers a certain enigmatic aura upon the head, heightening our sculpture's mystifying dimension.

Radiant with majesty, this head is imposing in its power and serenity, embodying Apollo in all of his divine splendour. Apollo was the son of Zeus and Leto and the twin brother of Artemis and, as such, he occupied a central place in the Graeco-Roman pantheon. He was the god of sun, light and masculine beauty, and also reigned over the arts – song, poetry, dance and music – and symbolised universal harmony. As the patron of the muses, he remains the ultimate embodiment of the classical ideal, a timeless model of physical and spiritual perfection. His renown is such that, from antiquity to the present day, he has been one of the most represented deities in art. The statues in his image, discovered all around the Mediterranean Sea, attest







to the magnitude of his influence. Apollo is often represented with abundant, flowing curls that spill elegantly over his shoulders or his torso, sometimes styled in a knot or encircled with a laurel crown according to the representation and theme.



- Ill. 1. Apollo Citharoedus, Roman, AD 130–138, marble, H.: 295 cm. Archaeological Museum of Burdur, Turkey.  
 Ill. 2. Statue of Apollo Citharoedus, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 202 cm. Vatican Museums.  
 Ill. 3. Apollo Barberini, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, probably a copy of the Apollo Citharoedus sculpted by Scopas, marble. Glyptothek, Munich, Germany.

Our head of Apollo is in keeping with the classical iconography of Apollo Citharoedus or Apollo Citharede, a common representation of the god of in Graeco-Roman art. This typology depicts Apollo holding a cithara (or lyre), the iconic instrument of his musical practice. According to the variant, he is depicted either sitting, in a calm, majestic position (Ill. 1), or standing, with the suggestion of a slight movement, energetic and inspired. The latter type applies to works such as the Vatican's Apollo Musagete (Ill. 2), which conveys a dynamic impetus steeped in lyricism. The Barberini type (Ill. 3), adopts a more ethereal, serene attitude. The Apollo Citharoedus preserved at the Vatican Museums (Ill. 4), on the other hand, has a hairstyle much

more similar to that of our Apollo. A central parting divides his wavy locks into five sections on either side, which are gathered into a neat knot at the back of his head. A curly lock tumbles from behind each partly hidden ear, in the style characteristic of Apollo. However, the Vatican's statue has a laurel crown, unlike our head, which is a noteworthy difference in the deity's presentation. Despite that, the similarities between both hairstyles are evident, as are the similarities between the features and angles of both faces, frontal, with the head somewhat tilted to his right, regular features, a round face and a serene expression. Another interesting sculpture (Ill. 5), preserved at the Louvre, displays a significant similarity with our head. Devoid of a crown, it displays a hairstyle almost identical to ours, but the posture is less frontal, introducing a slightly different dynamic.



- Ill. 4. Statue of Apollo Citharoedus, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 202 cm. Vatican Museums.  
 Ill. 5. Apollo Citharoedus, Roman, 150–50 BC, bronze, H.: 68 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

The most striking similarities are with the statue of a Dionysus Citharoedus (Ill. 6 and 7) dating from 340 to 330 BC and preserved at the Archaeological Museum of Delos. Although its subject has



traditionally been identified as Dionysus, some art historians suggest that it could actually be an Apollo Citharoedus. This statue, which shares many stylistic traits with our head, presents a frontal posture, a head slightly inclined to the right, a mouth with delicately parted lips and an expression imbued with serenity, details that resonate strongly with those of our sculpture. The hair, a central part of this resemblance, is also remarkably similar: in both cases, the curly hair is arrayed symmetrically, framing Apollo's face and partly covering his ears. The two defining curly locks, which tumble elegantly over his torso, are a distinctive feature of Apollo's hairstyle in this iconography. The details of his face such as the almond-shaped eyes and long neck, as well as the delicate way of suggesting the shape of his brows with his eyelids, all contribute to the striking resemblance.



Ill.6. and 7. Apollo or Dionysus Citharoedus, Greek, 340–330 BC. Archaeological Museum of Delphi, Greece.

As Martin Flashar underlines in his work *Apollon Kitharodos*, Cologne, 1992, our head could be an imperial copy from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, inspired by an original dating from 160-150 BC and now missing. Our head is thus the fascinating echo of an artistic tradition that began with major works such

as those of Delos, fusing classicism and innovation to glorify the representation of the god of music and poetry. This dialogue between different eras highlights the evolution and adaptation of Apollo's divine image, while still preserving the ideological foundations of a timeless aesthetic ideal.

Our head also has a unique history. Acquired in the 1960s by the trader Pino Donati, it was then part of a private collection in Japan before being lent to the Antikenmuseum Basel in 1982, where it stayed until 2024. The work was placed on display at the museum for several exhibitions and, in 1989, a cast (Ill. 8) was made, which is now preserved at the Skulpturhalle in Basel.



Ill.8. Apollo Citharoedus, 1989, plaster (cast). Skulpturhalle, Basel, Germany.

#### Publication:

Martin Flashar, *Apollon Kitharodos*, Cologne, 1992, pp. 56 and 134, Fig. 106ff.

#### Exhibition:

On loan to the Antikenmuseum Basel, 1982-2024 (on display in the 1980s and 1990s).











# STATUE OF A WARRIOR

GREEK, HELLENISTIC, 2<sup>ND</sup> – 1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY BC

BRONZE

HEIGHT: 27.5 CM.

WIDTH: 8 CM.

DEPTH: 14 CM.

PROVENANCE:

IN THE DUTCH COLLECTION OF JACOB DE WILDE CA 1700.

ACQUIRED BY THE ÉDOUARD DELESSERT GALLERY.

THEN SOLD ON 13 JUNE 1911, HÔTEL DROUOT, ROOM 9, LOT 104.

This delicate bronze statue representing a naked warrior frozen in action is a testament to ancient sculptors' keen interest in human anatomy. It also illustrates their taste for the representation of war epics, exalted here in a way that is both heroic and tragic.

Our noble warrior of mature age, frozen in his momentum, is wearing a helmet adorned with a crest and visor, which protects the nape of his neck while leaving his ears uncovered. Our warrior's curly hair escapes his helmet and fans out around his headwear in slight waves, flowing gracefully from his forehead to the nape of his neck. His hair covers the very tops of his ears and forms a curly beard, which covers his cheeks and chin. Each detail of

the beard and hair seems to have been carefully wrought. His parted lips, as though frozen in a cry or expression of pain, suggest a tension that conveys his engagement in the confrontation. His teeth, just visible, were undoubtedly originally covered with silver or copper. Just above them, a thin moustache is elegantly curled at the ends. The almond-shaped eyes of our man, framed with furrowed brows, give him a tragic expression. The pupils of the sculpture are delicately hollowed, suggesting that they were perhaps once inlaid with silver or red copper. The body of this statuette is executed with a remarkable precision, each detail attesting to an exceptional mastery in rendering the shapes of the human body. Particular attention was given to his musculature,



each muscle seeming to vibrate under the metallic surface. The warrior, arms raised in an alert attitude, leaning to his right, has a dynamic posture: his bent and advanced right leg bears all of the weight of his body, while his left leg, more extended, lifts slightly off the ground, intensifying the impression of movement and investment in combat. His curled fingers suggest that he once held weapons – perhaps a sword, a lance or a shield – that are now missing, but contributed to his combative posture. His torso displays salient clavicles and perfectly etched pectorals. As for his pupils, his nipples are hollow, since they were once inlaid. His abdominals and obliques are also exquisitely traced and reinforce his athletic appearance, while his navel is carefully carved. The back of our noble warrior is just as remarkable. His well-drawn shoulder blades frame an exquisitely etched spine that runs the whole length of his back, accentuating the lumbar muscles of our combatant. His muscled, round buttocks were crafted with a particular attention. The artist was able to convey the contraction of the warrior's muscles with a striking precision: slight hollows on the sides of each buttock attest to the physical effort of the warrior, captured mid-movement. Thus, each detail of his muscles seems to respond to the action he is undertaking. By its posture and realism, our statuette transcends the simple representation of the human body to capture the energy of a hero frozen in the momentum of his fight.

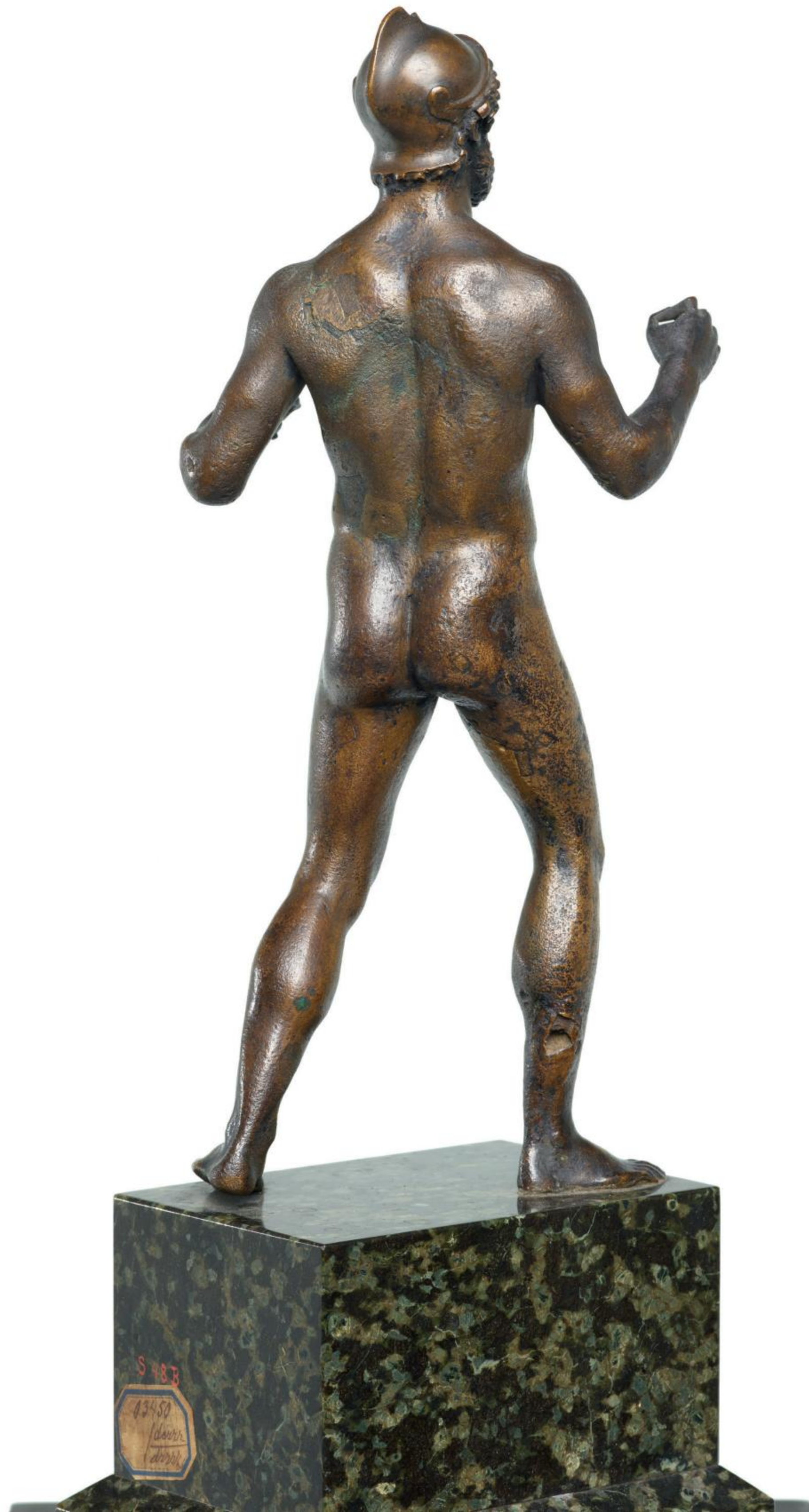
This statuette was crafted through the lost-wax technique, which made it possible to portray

details with extreme precision, whether for facial expressions or muscles. During the casting process, conduits, known as “vents”, are constructed to let out the air and gases trapped during the passage of the molten bronze. Once the metal has solidified, the marks left by those vents are carefully filled in and smoothed. However, on this sculpture, some discreet marks, having reappeared with the passing of time, attest to the artist's gesture and tell the story of its creation. These remnants, visible on several parts of the body – above the left pectoral, the left thigh, the right knee, the left shoulder blade and on the right buttock and thigh – take the form of small rectangles that have subtly fused with the surface. Far from harming the work, these marks give an extra stamp of authenticity. Finally, the irregular patina, sometimes tinted brown, sometimes orange, due to natural oxidation, attests to the passing of time while conferring a certain aura upon our statuette.

In the ancient world, and more particularly for the Greeks and the Romans, bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, was valued both for its durability and for its suitability for precisely fashioning shapes and details. Lost-wax casting, developed by the Egyptians to create small objects, was perfected by the Greeks, who adapted the technique to monumental sculptures. The stylistic characteristics of this statuette are fully in keeping with Hellenistic Greek art, as its sculptors sought to combine idealised proportions with a realistic anatomy. The attention paid to each tension of the body illustrates







that quest for perfection in the representation of movement. This work also attests to the emergence of an art of pathos, wherein the emphasis is placed on the representation of human emotions and dramatic tensions. By his posture, helmet and mature age, we may suppose that our statuette represents a warrior. This hypothesis was confirmed by the discovery of an old engraving, published in a work dedicated to the collection of Jacob de Wilde, the former owner of the work. On the engraving, our warrior is depicted armed, a sword in his right hand and a shield in his left, thus highlighting his role as a combatant (Ill. 5). Our magnificent Greek statuette portrays the very essence of the antique warrior depicted as a hero captured mid-action. His face betrays a palpable tension, a vulnerability almost, which reveals an emotional realism characteristic of Hellenistic art. However, the exact identification of this figure is still open to interpretation. He could be a legendary hero such as Ajax, or another figure from epic tales, chosen to embody timeless values such as bravery, strength and honour. This representation, which places action and pathos at the heart of the work, shows a clear break with the idealised and serene figures specific to classical art. From a historical perspective, this work also illustrates the importance of bronze in Greek and, later, Roman sculpture. However, Greek bronze sculptures have become rare, as many were melted over the centuries for their metal, particularly during late antiquity and the Middle Ages. Each remaining piece, such as this one, thus represents a precious testament not only to the technical mastery

of ancient sculptors, but also to the ideals, myths and values that structured their universe. There are still, however, some bronze statues of warriors dating to the Greek period. Among them, the famous Riace Warriors (Ill. 1) are an iconic example of the characteristics of Greek statuary. These sculptures demonstrate a meticulous attention to the warriors' athletic anatomy and wavy hair, beards and moustaches. They also showcase the use of bronze as the main material. Additionally, they have precious inlays for their eyes, lips, nipples and teeth. Our statuette presents similarities with other works. One, dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and belonging to a private collection (Ill. 2), shares several characteristics with our piece: its size, posture and the position of the arms, with the hands once holding weapons.

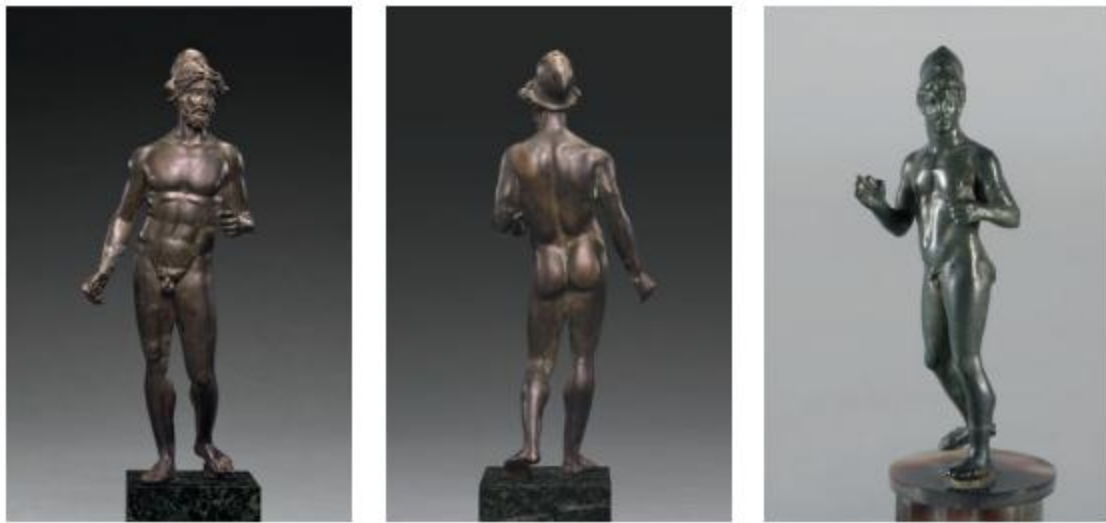


Ill. 1. Riace Warrior 1, Greek, ca. 460 BC, bronze, H.: 198 cm.  
National Archaeological Museum of Reggio Calabria,  
Riace, Italy.

We also note an attachment to realistic anatomy, which is particularly on display in the muscles and contracted buttocks, as in our sculpture. Another work, preserved at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (Ill. 3) and dating from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, exhibits a similar posture, right leg advanced



and bearing the weight of the body, while the bent left leg lifts off the ground. Both arms are raised and, in the Viennese work, the left hand probably held a shield, like our statuette. However, this figure seems to represent a naked athlete, perhaps a hoplite. His youthful appearance and less prominent musculature contrast with the maturity and developed musculature of our statuette, whose full beard suggests that he is a warrior rather than an athlete.



Ill. 2. A bronze figure of Ares or a heroic warrior, late Hellenistic, ca. 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, bronze, H.: 23.8 cm. Private collection.

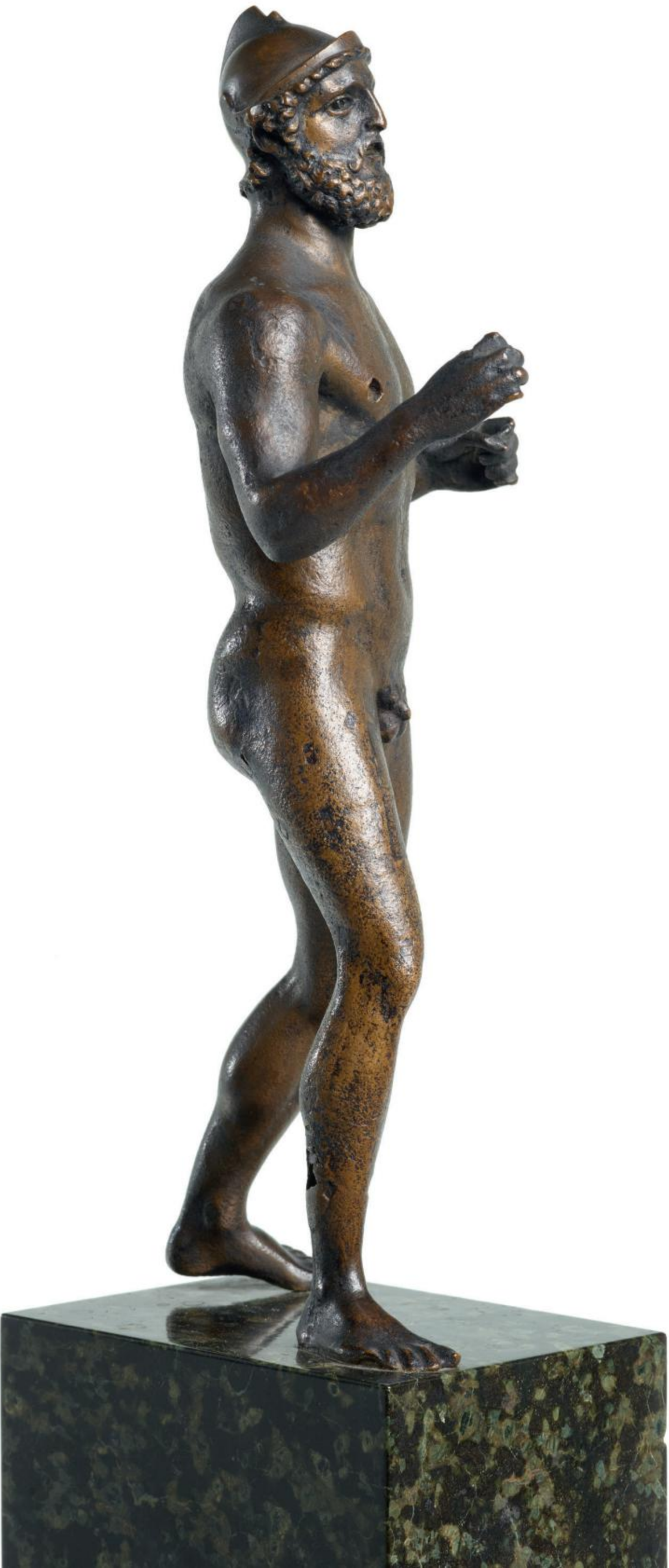
Ill. 3. Athlete or warrior, Greek, ca. 400 BC, bronze, H.: 6.9 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

Finally, the representation of warriors in ancient statuary continued with the Romans, who strongly embraced this model, as evidenced by the sculpture of a military leader preserved at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (Ill. 4). This work, inspired by a Greek original from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, represents a figure captured mid-action, wearing a helmet from which strands of curly hair escape, with a detailed beard and musculature. Here again, the pathos is obvious, with the dramatic expression on his face, which accentuates the figure’s heroic tension, as for our sculpture.



Ill. 4. Military leader, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, after a Greek original from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, bronze, H.: 44 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

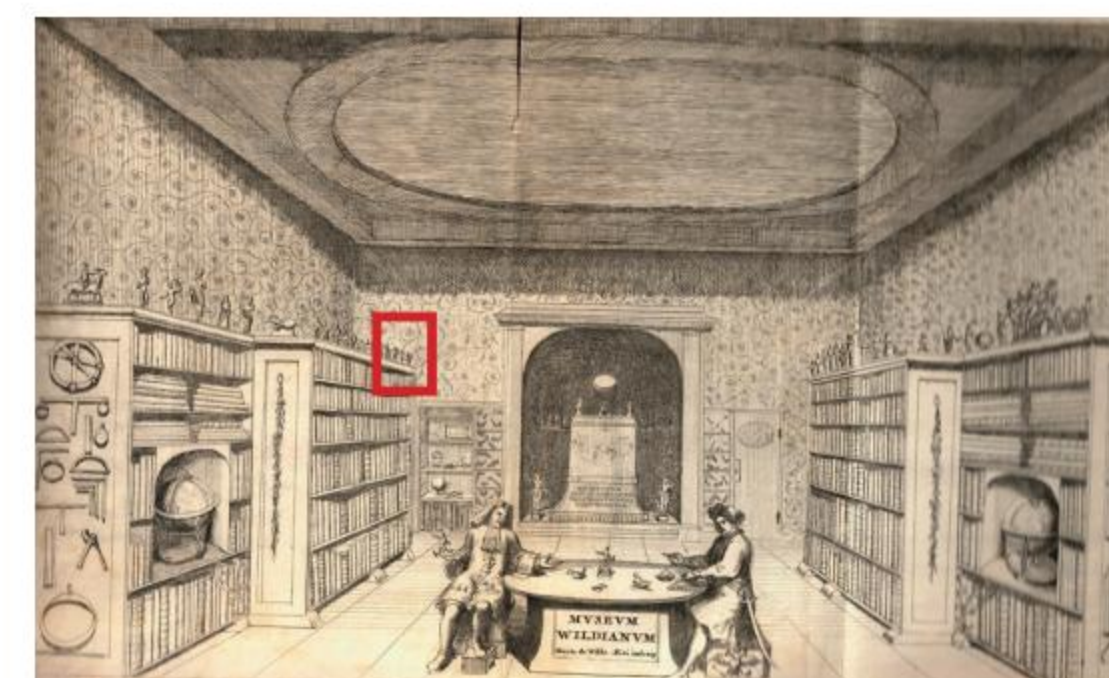
Our noble warrior belonged to the collection of the Dutchman Jacob de Wilde, an eminent 17<sup>th</sup>-century art collector and connoisseur, who worked as a tax collector for the Admiralty of Amsterdam. De Wilde, who was particularly interested in antiquity, owned a vast collection of antique art pieces. Many of them were represented in his work *Signa antiqua e museo Jacobi de Wilde*, published in 1700. This catalogue, illustrated by his daughter Maria, presents many pieces of his collection, including our sculpture, featured on plate 54 (Ill. 5). Jacob de Wilde’s reputation as an enlightened collector and his role in the preservation of antiquities ensured him an important place in the art world in that time. His residence, where he founded the *Museum Wildeanum*, attracted many renowned scholars and visitors (Ill. 6). Our statuette was then acquired by the Édouard Delessert gallery. Delessert was a reputable art collector and trader. Finally, the statuette was put up for sale at an auction at the Hôtel Drouot on 13 June 1911, as number 104, before joining other private collections (Ill. 7). We note that the weapons of the warrior had already disappeared in 1911.



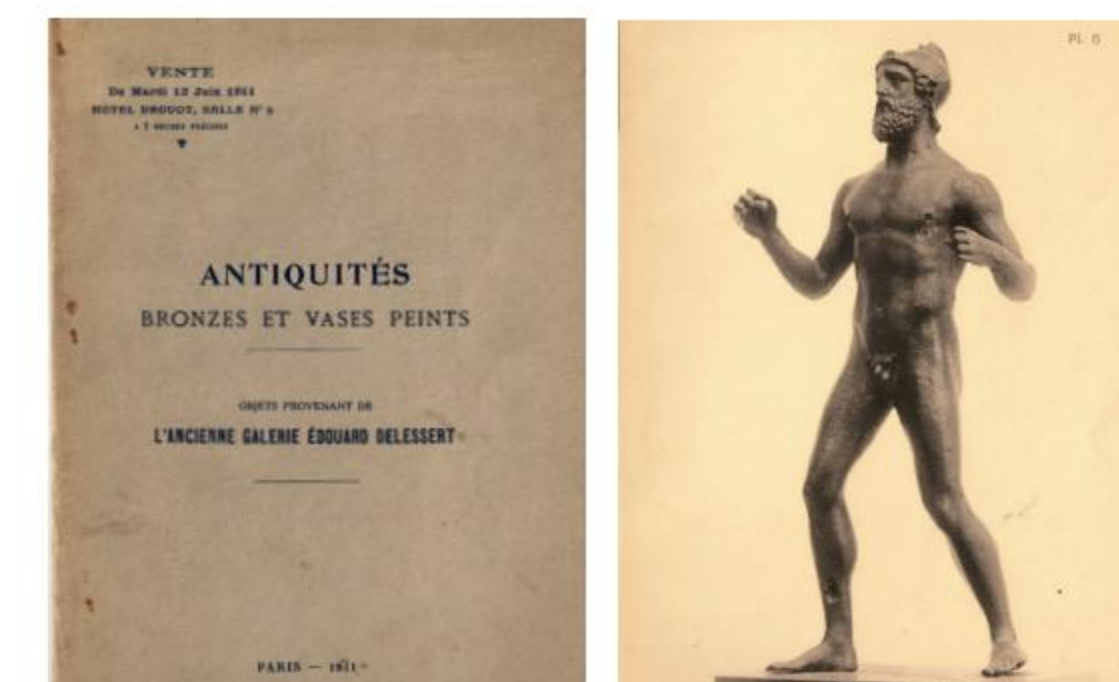




Ill. 5. Jacob de Wilde, *Signa antiqua e museo Jacobi de Wilde: veterum poetarum carminibus illustrata et per Mariam filiam aeri inscripta*, Amsterdam, 1700, pl. 54.



Ill. 6. *Ibid.*, page 1.



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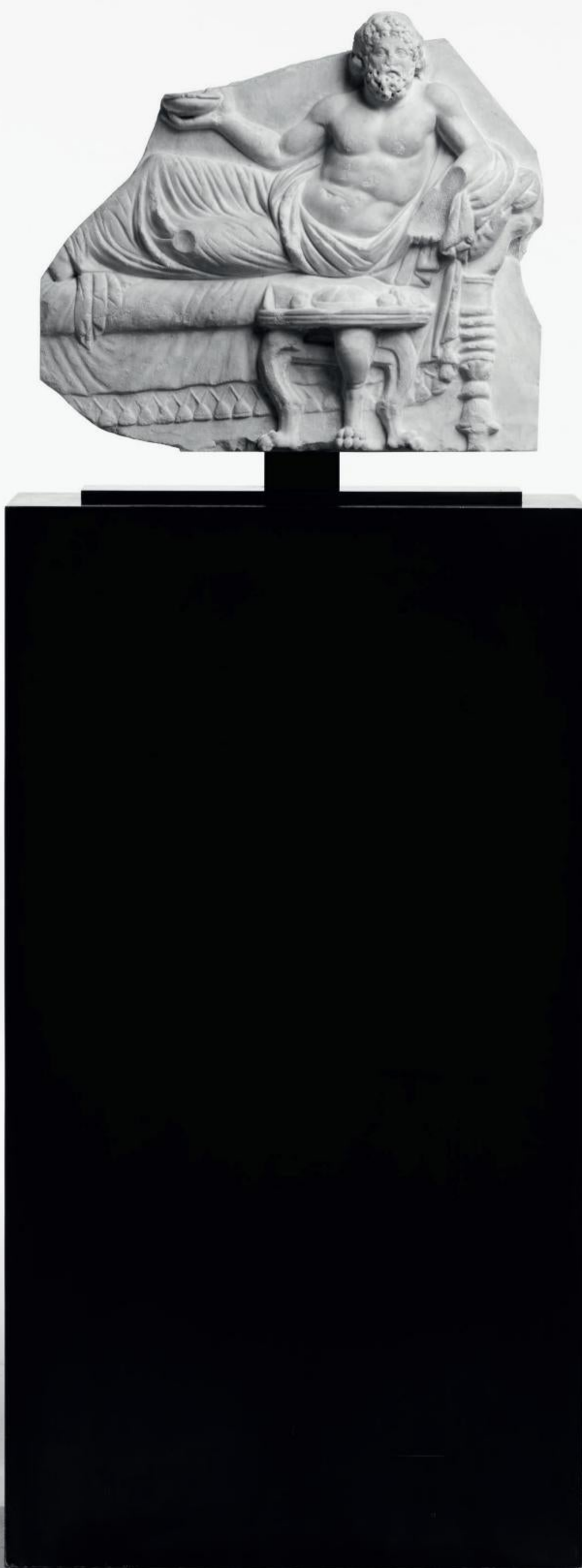
104. Guerrier nu, barbu et casqué, la jambe droite en avant, comme s'il se défendait contre un adversaire. Au bras gauche, il devait porter un bouclier, et sa main droite tenait une lance. Grande statuette d'art gallo-romain. Les yeux et les mamelles étaient incrustés d'argent ou de cuivre rouge. — Bronze décapé. H. 27 cent. — Socle en jaune de Sienné. (Voir planche V.)

Ill. 7. Catalogue des antiquités, bronzes et vases peints, objets provenant de l'ancienne galerie Edouard Delessert, Hôtel Drouot, Room 9, Tuesday 13 June 1911, Paris.

#### Publications:

- J. de Wilde, *Signa antiqua e museo Jacobi de Wilde: veterum poetarum carminibus illustrata et per Mariam filiam aeri inscripta*, Amsterdam, 1700, pl. 54.
- Catalogue des antiquités, bronzes et vases peints, objets provenant de l'ancienne galerie Edouard Delessert, Hôtel Drouot, Room 9, Tuesday 13 June 1911, Paris.





# RELIEF OF A RECLINING MAN

GREEK, HELLENISTIC, 2<sup>ND</sup> HALF OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY BC

MARBLE

RESTORATIONS FROM THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

HEIGHT: 46.3 CM.

WIDTH: 52.5 CM.

DEPTH: 5 CM.

## PROVENANCE:

FORMER COLLECTION OF CARDINAL JULES MAZARIN (1602–1661), PARIS AND ROME.

FORMER COLLECTION OF THOMAS HERBERT, 8<sup>TH</sup> EARL OF PEMBROKE (1656–1733),  
WILTON HOUSE, WILTSHIRE.

BY DESCENT TO SIDNEY HERBERT, 16<sup>TH</sup> EARL OF PEMBROKE (1906–1969),  
WILTON HOUSE, WILTSHIRE.

SOLD AT CHRISTIE'S ON 3 JULY 1961 AS LOT NO. 130.

FORMER PRIVATE COLLECTION OF JAN MITCHELL (1913–2009), NEW YORK,  
ACQUIRED THROUGH THE ABOVEMENTIONED SALE.

THEN PASSED DOWN BY DESCENT.

This magnificent fragment, sculpted in low relief, represents a bearded man reclining on a couch. The details of his face are finely etched: his eyes are wide open and delicately accentuated by thick eyelids. Above them, his arched eyebrows convey an

expression of astonishment. His full lips are parted, as though he were mid-conversation. His face shows his maturity, framed, as it is, by unruly, thick, curly hair and a beard to match. He could be Zeus, king of the Olympian gods. Leaning with his elbow on the



table by the couch, left forearm resting on a thick cloth, his right arm is raised, a cup held in his hand. His torso is bare, revealing a muscled abdomen, while his *himation* is wrapped delicately around his waist and legs, passing behind his back. The man's torso displays superb proportions. It is solid, each muscle tensed. His pectorals and abdominals are subtly etched and salient, displaying a statuesque body. His rather shallow navel is finely incised, with two folds sculpted above it, accentuating his arched position. Each of the muscles of his arms and shoulders is tensed, while his horizontal right hand is holding a phiale – a libation bowl used for rituals in ancient Greece. He is lying down, his left leg resting on the *kline* – a couch used in ancient Greece – while his folded right leg is crossed over it. His *himation* hides his nudity while revealing his naked right foot. The pleated fabric is rendered in a way that is both sensual and realistic, thanks to a play of folds of varying depths. The furniture in this scene is remarkably detailed. The *kline* is covered with a thick, soft-looking fabric that is embellished with elegant dangling tassels. Several ropes are twisted around its legs, the lower parts of which are shaped like lotus flowers, attesting to the sculptor's attention to detail. In front of the *kline* is a tripod table, the legs of which are shaped like panther legs, each claw individually sculpted in a clear attachment to realism. The edge of the round tabletop is decorated with a horizontal fluted pattern; on the table is a selection of food such as bread and a bunch of grapes. The soft look of the man's skin, masterful use of the drill for the representation of

his hair and beard, which creates a subtle play of light and shadow, and the particular attention paid to the décor and details making up this relief all attest to the considerable expertise of the artist who crafted it. The beauty of this figurative fragment is magnified by a soft patina that has enhanced the surface of the marble over the centuries.

Sculpted in a fine-grained marble, this fragment once adorned a sarcophagus or a funerary stele. This particular representation refers to the *Totenmahl* or “Feast of the Dead”, serving as both a funerary and a votive relief in classical antiquity. Such reliefs paid tribute to dead heroes and important members of society. The dead were often represented lying on a *kline*, surrounded by feasts and often deities, family members and animals – attributes that symbolised the status of the individual in society. Tripod tables, typical of Greek and then Roman antiquity, frequently feature in these representations, with an arrangement of food on the tabletop, symbolising a feast. Such funerary banquet scenes were commonly represented in antiquity. Spouses were frequently represented reclining together, celebrating the journey from life to death (Ill. 1–3).



Ill. 1. Votive relief with banquet scene, Greek, 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, marble, H.: 57.5 cm. Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, inv. no. 1999.011.003.

Ill. 2. Votive relief dedicated to a hero, Greek, late 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, marble, H.: 24 cm. The Met, New York, inv. no. 57.42.







A very similar example is currently preserved at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles (Ill. 4). It depicts a man in a position similar to that depicted in our fragment, on a *kline* of the same type, covered by a cloth with dangling tassels that is identical to ours. Another representation of the *Totenmahl* is preserved in New York (Ill. 5).



Ill. 3. Funerary altar, Hellenistic, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, marble, H.: 60.96 cm. The British Museum, London, inv. no. 1851.0912.2.

Ill. 4. Relief with heroic banquet, Hellenistic, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, marble, H.: 50.6 cm. The Getty Museum, Los Angeles, inv. no. 96.AA.167.



Ill. 5. Fragment of a relief with enthroned couple, Greek, 4<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, limestone, H.: 33 cm. The Met, New York, inv. no. 1996.151.1.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a sculptor restored our fragment and fitted it together with three other unrelated fragments: the figure of a standing Athena, from an acroterion, the figure of a young girl carrying a dish, from a sarcophagus, and a gryphon in profile, from a relief, perhaps a representation of Nemesis, as she rode in a chariot drawn by gryphons. This grouping enabled the restorer to create a continuous scene depicting a reclining Zeus at a banquet,

accompanied by Athena, standing on the left, and Hebe, attending him on the right, with his couch finished off by an ornamental sitting gryphon. This fragment, which once belonged to Cardinal Jules Mazarin, was documented in the inventory of the Palais Mazarin in 1653 and described as follows: «A bas-relief long crosswise, two palm leaves high or approximately, where we see a Jupiter seated near a round table loaded with various meats, holding a cup in hand and having at one side a Pallas and at the other a figure carrying a dish, all in white marble». A later drawing, made by Robert Castell in 1728, gives us an idea of the reinterpretation of the work as it could be viewed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.



Robert Castell, *The Villas of the Ancient Illustrated*, London, 1728, p. 119. Illustration showing the current relief in its former restored state.

This exceptional fragment of a votive relief was thus first documented in the collection of Cardinal Mazarin (1602–1661), an Italian diplomat and politician who served the papacy and, later, the kings of France and who was also godfather to Louis XIV (Ill. 6). In 1643, upon the death of Louis XIII, Anne of Austria, who had been made regent, named him Chief Minister of State. In the same



year, he took up residence in a Parisian palace in the 2<sup>nd</sup> arrondissement (currently the prints wing of the Bibliothèque nationale de France), which he rented and then purchased in 1649 (Ill. 7). It was in that private hotel that Mazarin set up his vast art collection – which included our relief – as well as his incipient library. A full inventory of his collection was drawn up a few years later. As a passionate collector and a man with a taste for art and opulence, he possessed a significant number of artworks, including many antiquities. He thus had whole crates of works sent to him from Rome. This Olympian pasticcio then passed smoothly from the Cardinal Mazarin’s collection to that of the English statesman Thomas Herbert (Ill. 8), 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Pembroke (1656–1733). The work remained at Wilton House (Ill. 9), his family estate, for generations, until it was sold at Christie’s as lot no. 130 on 3 July 1961. Probably shortly thereafter, a trader disassembled the relief and mounted the four fragments separately; at least three of them, including ours, were sold individually to Jan Mitchell (1913–2009) and added to his private collection in New York. Our fragment was then passed down by descent before finding its way to our collections.



Ill. 6. Cardinal Jules Mazarin (1602–1661), Portrait of the Cardinal Mazarin by the studio of Pierre Mignard (1658–1660), Chantilly, Musée Condé.



Ill. 7. Hôtel Tuboeuf, known as the Palais Mazarin, Rue des Petits Champs, Paris.



Ill. 8. Thomas Herbert, 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Pembroke (1656–1733).



Ill. 9. Wilton House, Salisbury, United Kingdom.

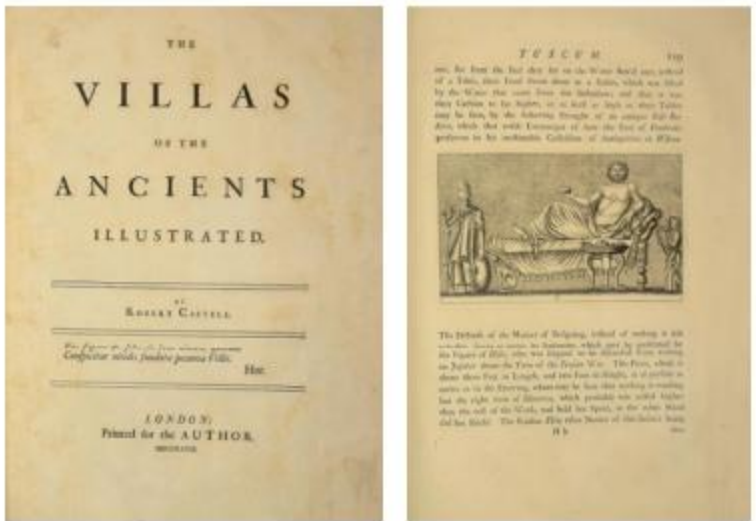
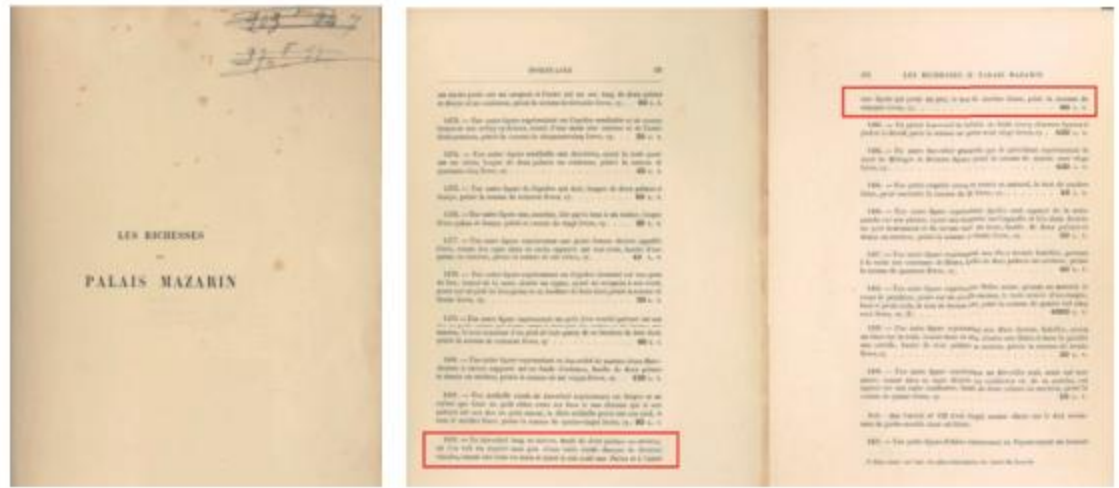




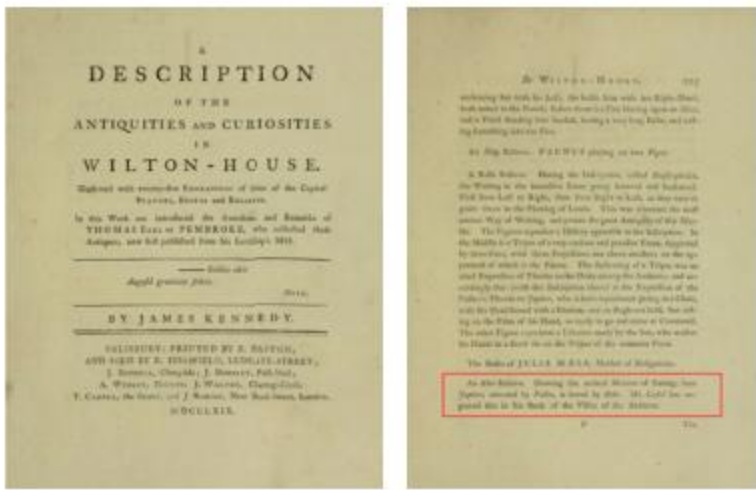


Publications:

- 1653, Inventory of the Palais Mazarin in Paris: «A bas-relief long crosswise, two palm leaves high or approximately, where we see a Jupiter seated near a round table loaded with various meats, holding a cup in hand and having at one side a Pallas and at the other a figure carrying a dish, all in white marble» (from Orléans 1861).
- 1661, Inventory of the Palais Mazarin in Paris, no. 1482 (from Cosnac 1885, Yoshida-Takeda 2004).



- Robert Castell, *The Villas of the Ancients Illustrated*, London, 1728, p. 119, illus.



- James Kennedy, *A Description of the Antiquities and Curiosities in Wilton-House*, Salisbury, 1769, p. 105.

- Richard Cowdry, *A Description of the Pictures, Statues, [...] at the Earl of Pembroke's House at Wilton*, London, 1751, p. 92.
- Thomas Martyn, *The English Connoisseur*, London, 1767, p. 120.
- George Richardson, *Aedes Pembrochianae or a Critical Account of the Statues, Bustos, Relievos [...] at Wilton-House*, London, 1774, p. 110.
- Henri Eugène Philippe Louis d'Orléans, Duke of Aumale, *Inventory of all the furniture of Cardinal Mazarin drawn up in 1653, and published from the original, preserved in the Archives de Condé*, London, 1861, p. 367, no. 123.
- Adolf Michaelis, *Ancient Marbles in Great Britain*, Cambridge, 1882, p. 689, no. 85.
- Comte de Cosnac, *The riches of the Palais Mazarin*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Paris, 1885, pp. 371-372, no. 1482.
- Patrick Michel, *Mazarin, Prince of collectors. The collections and furnishings of Jules Mazarin (1602-1661). History and Analysis*, Paris, 1999, p. 362.
- Tomiko Yoshida-Takeda, *Inventory drawn up in 1661 after the death of Cardinal Mazarin*, Paris, 2004, p. 242, no. 1482.
- Peter Stewart, *A Catalogue of the Sculpture Collection at Wilton House*, Oxford, 2020, p. 406, no. 151.





# CROWNED HEAD

ROMAN, CIRCA END OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AD - 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY AD

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 24 CM.	WIDTH: 18 CM.	DEPTH: 21 CM.
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PROVENANCE:

FORMER COLLECTION OF I.N. PHELPS STOKES IN NEW YORK BEFORE 18 NOVEMBER 1926.

ACQUIRED BY ERNEST BRUMMER (1891-1964) ON 29 APRIL 1943.

GIVEN TO ELLA BACHÉ BRUMMER. IN HER COLLECTION IN NEW YORK FROM 1964 TO 1999.

THEN PASSED DOWN BY DESCENT TO HER NEPHEW, DR JOHN LASZLO.

PROPERTY OF THE “BRUMMER COLLECTION”, BELONGING TO DRS JOHN AND PAT LASZLO,  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA.

This exceptional, life-sized marble head represents a young man crowned with a laurel wreath. The head, which is slightly turned to the right, gives a subtle impression of movement. The young man’s face is distinguished by finely sculpted features, imbuing the whole piece with a certain harmony. The polished surface of the marble makes his skin look smooth and lustrous, subliming the youth and serenity of this figure. His slanted, almond-shaped eyes, quite close together, are deeply carved, creating a complex play of light and shadow, further intensifying his expression and adding to the realism

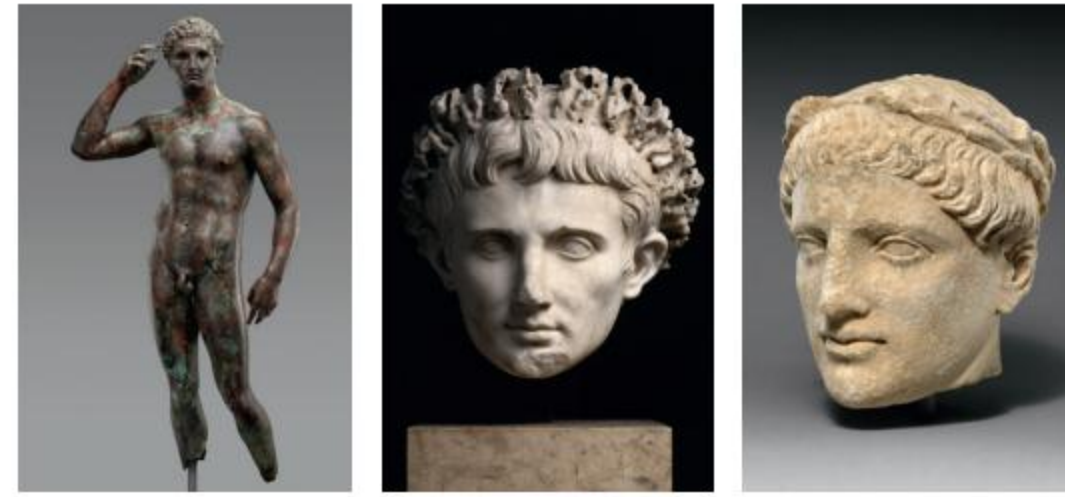
of the work. Framed by thick eyelids, these eyes are surmounted by pronounced brow lines. Their ridges are distinctly etched and arch out from the top of his nose before gradually tapering to an end at his temples. Although the nose is now damaged, we can still discern a certain elegance. His full, round cheeks and high cheekbones give his face a refined structure that adds to his youthful air. His mouth is carefully sculpted, showcasing full, parted lips. Its slightly falling corners introduce a touch of gravity that contrasts harmoniously with the youthful softness of his cheeks. Under his mouth, a narrow



chin features a deep, delicately carved dimple, a detail that accentuates the dynamic contours of his face. There are some slight chips on his chin and left eyebrow, which in no way mar the overall beauty of the work. The partial presence of a neck suggests that this piece once belonged to a full-sized statue that is now fragmentary. His meticulously sculpted hair flows in supple, animated locks. Individually sculpted, these locks seem governed by a fluid, harmonious organisation. His crescent-shaped curls fall lightly onto his forehead, delicately framing his face. Two main locks stand out over his forehead, while others spread out around his head, coming down to his temples and the nape of his neck. His hair is enhanced by a remarkably crafted laurel wreath. Sculpted in high relief, it attests to the very skilful handling of a chisel. The exquisitely detailed leaves encircle the head, forming a wreath that is tied in an elegant knot at the front. The back of the head was just as meticulously fashioned: the locks spill down, forming similar curls, while the wreath is harmoniously moulded to the shape of the head.

Crafted from a coarse-grained, veined white marble, this work demonstrates a remarkable technical mastery. Of an exceptional quality of execution, it is distinguished by the delicacy of its features and the harmony of its proportions, resulting in a strikingly beautiful face. With the passing of time, its surface has been marked with subtle traces of wear, although these do not mar the fineness of the sculpture. Part of the left side of the head presents a fracture, but the smooth planes of the cheek and forehead are still

intact. Traces of a dark, reddish patina appear in some places, adding to its character and attesting to its antiquity.



- Ill.1. Statue of a victorious youth, Greek, 300–100 BC, bronze, H.:151.5 cm. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. inv 77.AB.30  
Ill.2. Head of Augustus, Roman, imperial period, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 40 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.  
Ill.3. Head of a beardless male votary with a wreath of leaves, early Hellenistic period, mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, limestone, H.: 22.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Our magnificent head of a young man crowned with a laurel wreath is in line with an iconographic tradition that is both Greek and Roman, whereby the wreath of leaves symbolises victory and glory. Used in ancient Greece to honour the victors of athletic competitions, particularly the Pythian and Olympic Games, under the Roman Empire, it also became an insignia of power and military triumph. Worn by emperors in their triumphal processions, it confers an honorific and political dimension upon sculpted portraits. This head could thus be that of an athlete, a hero or a figure honoured for his accomplishments. Iconographic comparisons make it possible to shed light on this hypothesis. The statue of a victorious youth preserved at the J. Paul Getty Museum (Ill. 1), for instance, illustrates the Greek tradition of representing crowned athletes, while the Louvre's head of Augustus (Ill. 2) attests to the imperial use of







laurel as a symbol of power. Furthermore, a limestone head preserved at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Ill. 3) attests to the emergence of this motif in the Hellenistic period, when it could have been used in ceremonial contexts.

However, our work is notably different: it is very likely a Roman production inspired by a Greek original attributed to Polykleitos, famous sculptor from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, recognised for his Canon, a work that enshrined his theories on ideal mathematical proportions and beauty. The balanced rendering of the shapes of the young man's face and the delicacy of his features recall Polykleitos' aesthetic principles, despite the fact the sculpture was created several centuries later, probably at the end of the Republic or at the beginning of the Roman Empire. This work shares some characteristics with other reproductions of Polykleitos' works, particularly the head of a young man preserved at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Ill. 4).



Ill.4. Head of a youth; copy of a work attributed to Polykleitos, early imperial period, Claudian, ca. 41-54 AD, marble, H.: 28.6 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.  
Copy of a Greek bronze statue from ca. 450 BC.

There are striking similarities in the shaping of the eyes and the sculpting of the hair and mouth. This head is, incidentally, associated with the statue of



Ill.5. Orestes and Pylades or the San Ildefonso Group, attributed to a pupil of Pasiteles, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 161 cm. Museo del Prado, Madrid.

Ill.6. Orestes and Pylades, Roman, imperial period, 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, (classicistic pastiche by the school of Pasiteles after models from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC) marble, H.: 162 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

a naked athlete, probably a discus thrower, copied from a model by Polykleitos and dating from the Claudian period. From the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, the demand for copies and adaptations of prestigious Greek works rose sharply among the Roman elite. Sculptors such as Pasiteles and his disciples excelled in the art of reinterpreting Greek masterpieces and thus created new sculpted pieces, often to embellish patrician residences. This practice continued under the Empire and gave rise to particularly sophisticated classicistic pastiches such as the San Ildefonso Group (Ill. 5), discovered in the Horti Sallustiani in Rome. The head of the young torchbearer from this group closely resembles our example. Another relevant comparison can be drawn with the sculpture of Orestes and Pylades preserved at the Louvre (Ill. 6). Sculpted in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, this work perfectly illustrates the classicistic approach of Pasiteles' school, inspired by Greek models from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. Finally, a last comparison can be made with the head of a young man preserved

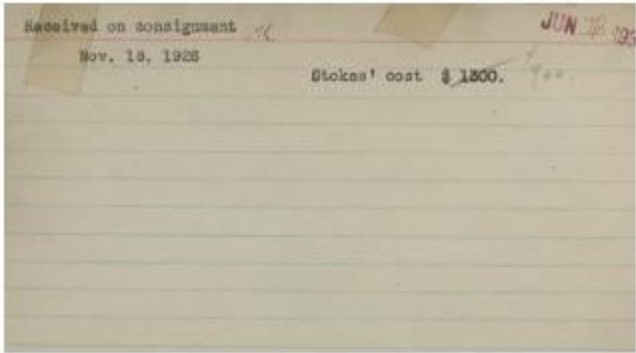


at the Gregoriano Profano Museum (Ill. 7), dated to the Claudian period. Although its dimensions are more modest, it presents a similar typology.



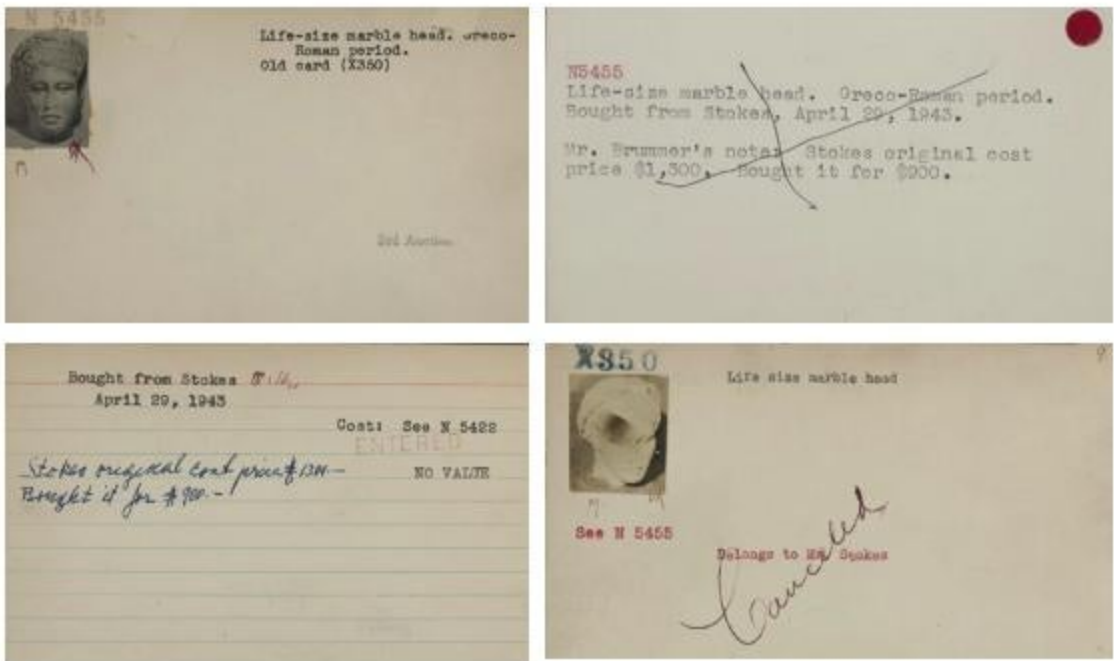
Ill.7. Head of a young man, Roman, Claudian period, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 18.5 cm. Gregoriano Profano Museum, Vatican, Italy.

This delicate masculine head also has a prestigious history, having belonged to notable figures from artistic and intellectual circles. It was first in the collection of Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes (1867–1944), an American architect, historian and housing reformer, known for his collection of historical prints and drawings linked to the history of the United States (Ill. 8). The deposit bond in our possession attests to the fact the work was in his collection before 18 November 1926 (Ill. 9).



Ill.8. Portrait of Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes.  
Ill.9. Consignment of 18 November 1926.

The work was then acquired on 29 April 1943 by Ernest Brummer (1891–1964), a renowned art trader operating in Paris and New York. Several documents attest to the transaction (Ill. 10).



Ill.10. Ernest Brummer archives.

Ernest Brummer (Ill.11) studied music and art history at the Sorbonne and the École du Louvre, where he came into contact with figures such as Salomon Reinach. He then partnered with his brothers Joseph and Imre to found the Galerie Brummer Frères – Brummer Curiosités at 3, Boulevard Raspail, in Paris. Unlike his brothers, who emigrated to open a branch in the United States







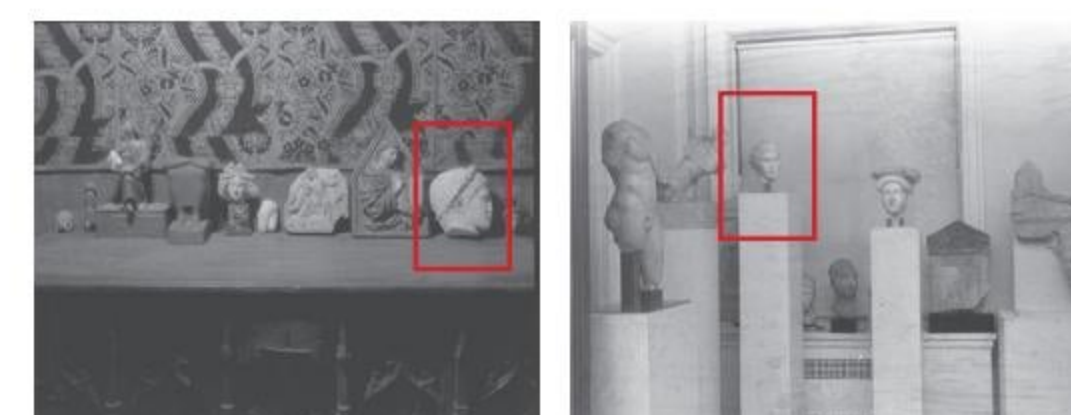
before the First World War, Ernest stayed in France and continued to make acquisitions across Europe. It was only at the beginning of the Second World War that he joined his brothers in the United States. Our head is documented as being in their Parisian gallery on 16 May 1940, when it was photographed (Ill. 12). After Joseph Brummer's death in 1947, the family collection was dispersed over several auctions. The work was then given to Ella Baché Brummer, Ernest's wife, who preserved it in her collection in New York from 1964 to 1999. It then passed by descent to her nephew, Dr John Laszlo, before joining the Brummer collection, the property of Drs John and Pat Laszlo, in Atlanta, Georgia. The label reading "COLL ERNEST BRUMMER" on the left side of the head attests to its time in that prestigious collection, cementing its historical and artistic importance.

#### Publication:

- Y. Biro, C. Brennan and C. Force. *The Brummer Galleries. Paris and New York: Defining Taste from Antiquities to the Avant-Garde*, Leiden, 2023 o 131 fig 130c.



Ill.11. Portraits of Ernest Brummer (1891-1964).



Ill.12. Photo archives of Brummer Frères – Brummer Curiosités, Paris, 16 May 1940.









# BUST OF A GOVERNOR

EGYPTIAN, SAIS, LATE PERIOD, 2<sup>ND</sup> HALF OF DYNASTY XXVI, CIRCA 580 BC

GREYWACKE

HEIGHT: 31 CM.

WIDTH: 21,5 CM.

DEPTH: 13 CM.

## PROVENANCE:

PROBABLY ORIGINALLY FROM THE TEMPLE OF NEITH IN SAIS.

IN THE COLLECTION OF COMMANDER SIR JOHN FRANCIS WHITAKER MAITLAND (1903-1977).

SOLD AT SOTHEBY'S LONDON, 30 APRIL 1935, DESCRIBED UNDER LOT NO. 24.

DOCUMENTED BY SIR ALAN GARDINER FOR HIS PERSONAL ARCHIVES

ON THE OCCASION OF THAT SALE.

COLLECTION OF DR F., SWITZERLAND, FROM THE 1960S.

THEN PASSED DOWN BY DESCENT UNTIL 2024, PARISIAN PRIVATE COLLECTION.

This fascinating Egyptian bust represents a high-ranking governor from Sais. Although the name of the governor is now lost owing to the missing parts of the monument, this work nevertheless attests to his importance in the context of ancient Egypt.

Our elegant bust is represented bare-chested, in a hieratic position, with delicate facial features. His almond-shaped eyes, accentuated by sharply etched contours, are rather deeply carved. They are surmounted by thin, arched eyebrows, sculpted in relief. His nose, now fragmentary, was framed by high, salient cheekbones and its wings dovetailed

with his round cheeks through the delicate carving of his philtrum, almost giving the impression that our sculpture is smiling. His partly eroded mouth presents thick lips with quite deeply carved, upturned corners, again adding to the impression that a slight smile is animating his serene face. His small, round, rather subtle chin forms a delicate transition with our governor's thick neck. There is a bag wig upon his head, which leaves his ears uncovered. These are quite large and slightly protruding, presenting a naturalistic shape through subtle carving. His delicate features, round face and



the polish achieved by the sculptor give our governor a youthful appearance. His bust, which conveys a straight, static posture, is characterised by square, broad shoulders. Two thin, very light lines in relief join in a delicate dimple under his neck, forming his collarbone. His pectorals, marked by round, salient nipples, are almost geometric and complete this square-shaped body with its delicate musculature. His tube-like arms are positioned along his body. The space between his arms and flanks was not carved out, a common trait in the production of Egyptian statues. Despite the diagonal break, we can guess at the original position of his arms, which must have been folded facing the front to rest upon his knees, also folded. At the back, his perfectly rounded bag wig rests upon a wide dorsal pillar covered in inscriptions. On its main face, three columns of hieroglyphs inform us of the identity and role of our figure. For instance, we can read that “he who deviates from his path is bound for condemnation”, as well as a reference to the city of Sais; he thereby declares his faithfulness to the patroness of the city, Neith. We can also decrypt the titles of priest and high-ranking governor, which indicate that he was definitely an important figure in Sais. On each side, there is an additional column of inscriptions. What remains of the inscriptions on the dorsal support are fragments of an appeal to the living, a typical feature calling upon passersby for prayers or offerings. Engraved in a particularly legible, elegant style, these hieroglyphs are rather unique and of very high quality.

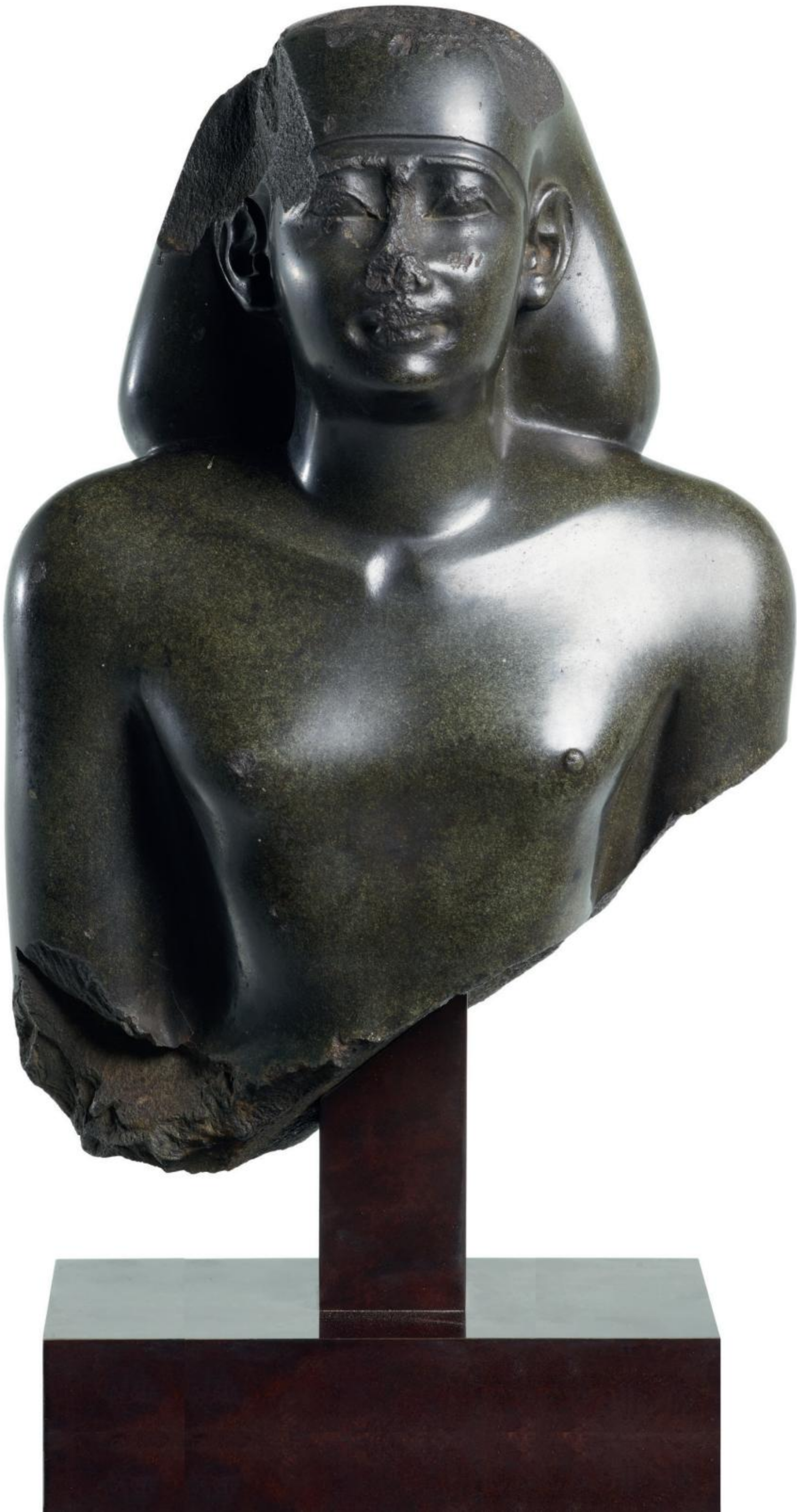
The dorsal pillar, which forms a vertical support, made its appearance during the New Kingdom. This element became prevalent from Dynasty XXVI, also known as the Saite Dynasty. Psamtik I, the first pharaoh of the dynasty, established his capital in Sais, in the western Delta, following the Assyrian invasion of Egypt. The reunified country regained its independence and there followed a period of artistic revival, sometimes referred to as the “Saite Renaissance”. In that period, Neith, the patron goddess of Sais, supplanted Amun as the first god of the monarchy. She was the mother of the sun god Ra and the patroness of weavers. She was generally represented with the seven arrows she had used to create the world. The city of Sais would later become the royal necropolis for the whole dynasty.



Ill. 1. Statue of Nakhtherheb, Late Period, Dynasty XXVI, ca. 590 BC, quartzite, H.: 113 cm. British Museum, London, inv. no. 1914,0613.1.

Ill. 2. Statue of a dignitary, Late Period, Dynasty XXVI, 570–526 BC, probably from Sais, greywacke, H.: 43.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. E 25390.

During the Saite Renaissance, private statues were mainly based on ancient prototypes, but were characterised above all by a mix of elements taken from different periods. Stone works shared carefully polished surfaces that promoted the nature of the material, as is the case for our bust of a governor.







The number of statuary types was still relatively limited and, through all of Dynasty XXVI, the type of the “kneeling priest” was prevalent. The priest could have his hands flat on his thighs or be holding before him a naos containing the statue of a deity in relief. By comparing our statue to similar works, we suppose that our figure must have been clothed in a simple pleated loincloth fastened around his hips, leaving his torso bare. He must have been kneeling, in the hieratic posture favoured by the Egyptians, forearms and hands resting along his thighs and palms facing down. The statue of the dignitary Naktherheb (Ill. 1) displays that very posture, as does the Louvre’s Saite statue (Ill. 2). The unique style of our sculpture, the sculpting of his face, his bag wig and the references to the city of Sais enable us to estimate that the work was sculpted in the second half of Dynasty XXVI (around 595–525 BC). Several similar examples, now preserved in various museums across the globe, support this estimate (Ill. 1 to 7).



Ill. 3. Bust of the dignitary Ankhefensekhmet, Late Period, Dynasty XXVI, 664–526 BC, greywacke, H.: 43.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. E 25459.

Ill. 4. Naophorous statue, Late Period, Dynasty XXVI, 610–595 BC, greywacke, H.: 26.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. E 10709.



Ill. 5. Naophorous statue, Late Period, end of Dynasty XXVI, 610–595 BC, stone, H.: 29.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. E 14705.

Ill. 6. Statue of the military commander Amasis, Late Period, Dynasty XXVI, 600–570 BC, meta-greywacke, H.: 18 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. no. 66.99.68.

Ill. 7. Bust of a judge, Late Period, Dynasty XXVI, 664–525 BC, greywacke, H.: 23 cm. Museo Egizio, Turin, inv. no. cat. 3075.

This bust, which is distinguished by its fineness and elegance, features classic characteristics of Egyptian sculpture, wherein figures were represented in both an idealised and a symbolic way. The governor is represented bare-chested, which expresses both virility and dignity, in accordance with the standards for representing the Egyptian elites. The smooth wig adorning his head underlines his high status. The hieroglyphs on the dorsal pillar, linked directly to power and divinity, reinforce the sacred, majestic aura that emanates from this work.

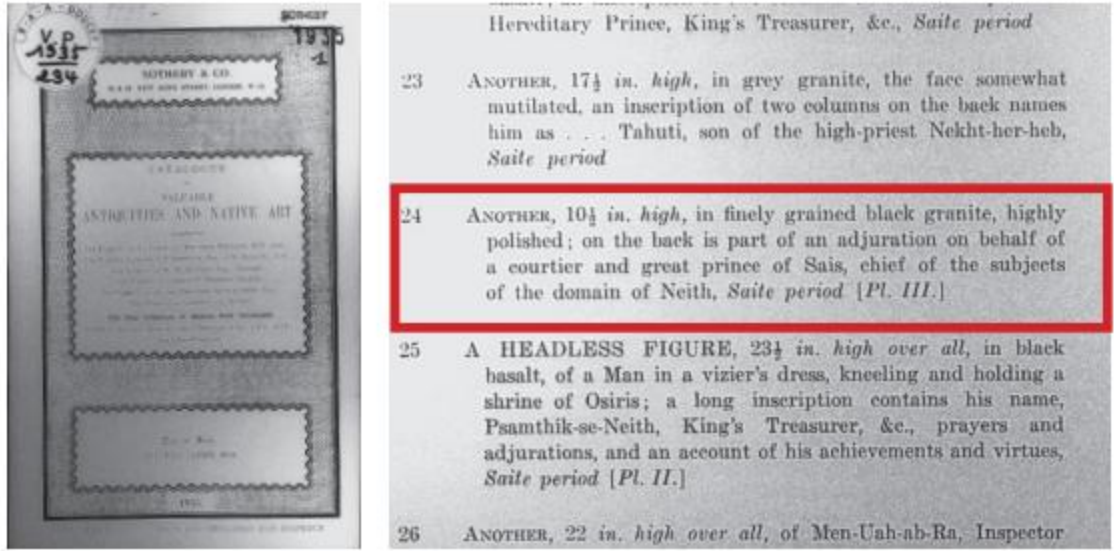
Our statue is sculpted from a stone that is quite typical of ancient Egyptian productions: greywacke. It is a very fine-grained, smooth, chemically homogeneous stone, allowing for a perfect polish and highly valued for its hardness and durability. Its dark colour, with different, particularly dark tones of green, is what makes it unique. The greywacke used in Egypt was often extracted from local



quarries situated in Upper Egypt, particularly in the regions around Luxor and Thebes, the deposits of which were exploited from the Old Kingdom until the Roman Empire. Its rareness, combined with the beauty and durability of the stone, meant that it was a material reserved for exceptional works, often associated with royalty and great figures. This stone was highly popular due to its colour, which likens it to bronze. Our bust, of a very deep, dark green, appears lustrous and smooth, which makes the surface very luminous and accentuates the majesty of the figure represented. The fact greywacke lent itself to such a magnificent polish, combined with its unique texture, imbued sculptures carved from the stone with a distinct gravitas and solemnity. In the case of our bust of a governor, that smooth, careful finish is a sign of the work's value and importance. Such a masterful polish also enabled the artist who created our work to showcase their qualities as a sculptor, while enhancing the particularly delicate shaping of the face.



Ill. 8. Naophorous statue from Sais, Late Period, Dynasty XXVI, 664-525 BC, basalt, H.: 57 cm. Penn Museum, Philadelphia, inv. no. 42-9-1.



Ill. 9. Sales catalogue of 30 April 1935, Sotheby's.



Ill. 10. Plate III.

In all likelihood, our superb bust is from the temple of the great goddess Neith in Sais, one of the main centres of religious and cultural life under Dynasty XXVI. It was then in the private collection of Sir John Francis Whitaker Maitland (1903-1977), a British statesman and Member of Parliament and of the House of Commons. His collection was sold at Sotheby's London on 30 April 1935 (Ill. 9). As a great lover of Egyptian art and a seasoned collector, Maitland was in possession of several Egyptian sculptures from Sais, which were also sold during that sale. Some are currently preserved in international museums, including an imposing naophorous statue preserved at the Penn Museum in Philadelphia (Ill. 8). Our bust corresponds to lot 24 of the Sotheby's sales catalogue. Its description is accompanied by a photo, reproduced in plate III, which is actually that of lot 22 (Ill. 10). However, the description for lot 24 definitely corresponds to







our sculpture. On the occasion of the sale, some of the inscriptions were copied by the famous English Egyptologist Sir Alan Gardiner (1879-1963 - Ill. 11 and 12) for his personal archives. Thanks to his tracing of the right column, which has the same characters as the beginning of the cartouche and the same break, we can say with absolute certainty that this is our sculpture and that it was thus sold in London in 1935. Our bust of a governor was probably sold at this sale and then added to the collection of Dr F., in Switzerland, from the 1960s. The work was then passed down by descent within a Parisian private collection from 2015 until 2024, before joining our collections.



Ill. 11. Sir Alan Gardiner.



Ill. 12. Sir Alan Gardiner's note









# ARTEMIS OF EPHEBUS

ROMAN, 1<sup>ST</sup> - 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY AD

MARBLE

17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY RESTORATIONS

HEIGHT: 118 CM.

WIDTH: 28 CM.

DEPTH: 14 CM.

PROVENANCE:

FORMERLY IN THE ENGLISH PRIVATE COLLECTION OF PHILIP RUNDELL (1746-1827).

THEN IN THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF THE BRITISH INTERIOR DESIGNER

ROBERT KIME (1946-2022).

This extraordinary sculpture depicts an altogether unique image of the goddess Artemis, or Diana for the Romans. Very different to the usual representations, she is sculpted standing, in a hieratic attitude. The composition is practically architectural and the whole piece displays a wealth of symbols.

The upper part of the work including the head, the bust and part of the ependytes is Roman, while the lower part was restored in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, judging from the techniques used. The delicate facial features of our Artemis convey a gentle, serene expression: large, deeply sculpted almond shaped eyes, very lightly carved pupils and rimmed eyelids

rendered in relief, all surmounted with fine, arched brow ridges that start at the bridge of her nose and end quite low on her temples. Her straight, large nose is strong and its very delicate tip is slightly rounded and connected to her mouth by a charming, shallowly carved dimple. Her small, full lips are pressed tightly together and dominate a small, slightly pointed chin, also with a shallow dimple in the centre, accentuating the softness of the goddess' face. Her ears are hidden by a voluminous, elaborate hairstyle that frames her face. Wavy hair forms two distinct masses on either side of a central parting, each going in the opposite direction, as though the hair was attached to the back of her head. The



locks were individually sculpted in relief – a major endeavour – which creates a play of shadow and light. Curls escape over her temples and fall in front of her ears in an impressively lifelike manner. Over Artemis' thick, curly hair, we can make out a flower crown, so detailed that it is possible to distinguish the different species of plants. There, too, the sculptor wrought a very impressive play of relief, particularly by using a drill, enabling them to carve deep into the marble. The central flower is much larger than the others, with a deep corolla and very detailed petals. An unusual object is placed on the head of our Artemis: an architectural feature composed of towers, at the back of which a veil is attached, covering the back of her head entirely and falling on either side in an elegant, pleated drapery to her shoulders. This ceremonial element, called a 'mural crown', is an attribute that symbolises the walls of a fortified town, which, in antiquity, crowned the guardian deities of cities. In this case, it is thus a symbolic representation of the city of Ephesus, as Artemis was the city's tutelary deity. It is depicted by a circular, crenelated outer wall with a tower on each side and an arch shaped opening in the middle. The higher level is represented by a square tower with large corbels, slightly fragmentary. The entire "monument" is pierced with round windows and an arrowslit on either side of the central entrance arch. Her neck, straight and slim, displays a light fold beneath her chin, again showing the sculptor's desire to be true to life. On either side, a row of three flowers – similar to those of her crown – seems to fall down and is held in place between the

goddess' head and her veil. The goddess is adorned with a large neckpiece, richly decorated in several respects. The part encircling her neck is made up of a row of flowers, again similar to those of her crown. Underneath, two flat concentric bands are joined by a row of acorns represented in relief. Their shapes become elongated as they near the middle of her bust. A central flower with four petals divides the row of acorns in two. Below, elongated elements that are difficult to identify hang from the last pectoral band, while three flowers, again the same type as the others, punctuate the intermediate space. From her chest to her pelvis, a multitude of what has been identified as breasts hang down. Her arms, fragmentary from the elbows, are bare and their position seems to indicate that they were folded horizontally. Her lower body is encased in a sheath shaped garment called an *ependytes*. It is decorated with a grid pattern, each square containing a high relief animal protome or a flower. The squares are divided in three columns of ten, and some, from the Roman era, are inserted into the sheath restored in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. We can thus recognise, more or less, in the central column, from top to bottom: an eagle, a griffin, an elephant, a stag, a wolf, a goat, a panther, and three animals harder to identify. The right column displays a bull, a rosette, a horse, a ram, a dog, a panther, a wolf, a lion, a feline and a doe. Finally, in the left column, we can see a cow, a rosette identical to that in the right column, a unicorn, a deer, a dog, then five tother beasts that are difficult to identify. The animals are depicted in







great detail. This extensive knowledge of the animal repertory – even exotic, in some cases – once again proves the great mastery of the artist behind it. The ependytes ends at her ankles in what resembles an inverse trapezium. From there, the lower part of the garment spills out in many deep, seemingly moving folds, covering her heels at the back and much of her feet in the front, leaving only her toes uncovered. These are represented with a great deal of realism, the phalanges being easily differentiable and her nails carved with precision. The goddess' feet lie flat, parallel to each other, on a square base with three levels.

The back of our Artemis is only sparsely detailed: the outer wall of the mural crown is not pierced with windows and her veil is outlined, but the folds are not as detailed as in the front. Her anatomy is hinted at, but seems obscured by the thickness of the fabric, which features some very shallow folds.

Despite her Greek name, the Ephesian goddess in no way resembles the Greek goddess of the hunt. Rather, she embodies a primitive local deity worshipped by the Greeks when they settled on the coast of Asia Minor between 1000 and 800 BC, and particularly in Ephesus, situated in present day western Turkey. Towards the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, a monumental marble temple was built in her honour on the site of a smaller, older temple. Originally, the cult figure, which was associated with fertility and protection, had a tubular shape and was made of polychrome wood. It only took

on an anthropomorphic form from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, as a narrow, hieratic figure with its arms held along its body, then, later, with its arms extended outwards. However, the devotional figure of the Hellenistic period, largely reworked in the Roman era, is very different and corresponds to the type of the cult statue as it was presented at the great festival of Artemis, as can be seen on a relief of the frieze of the Temple of Hadrian in Ephesus, the original of which is conserved at Ephesus Archaeological Museum in Selçuk, Turkey (Ill. 1), as well as on many coins (Ill. 2). Her lower body was then covered by a metal dress adorned with reliefs. On her head, she wore a tall crown made of a golden metal (*polos*), at the back of which a veil was attached. Her chest was adorned with a triple necklace of flowers and a pendant made up of many elements resembling breasts.



Ill. 1. Detail of the frieze of the Temple of Hadrian in Ephesus showing the birth of the city. Ca. AD 117-118, Ephesus Archaeological Museum, Selçuk, Turkey.

Ill. 2. Cistophorus of Claudius representing Diana (Artemis) minted in Ephesus, AD 41-54.

The most striking thing about this sculptural typology is undoubtedly the multitude of “breasts”. While difficult to interpret, their identification is linked to the cult of the goddess. As the tutelary deity



of the town of Ephesus, Artemis was associated with life, fertility and many sacrifices. Here, the “breasts” look like curved, hanging objects, arrayed in successive layers. If we interpret these anatomic features as multiple breasts, the goddess’ maternal aspect also corresponds to an image of fertility, contrasting with the strictly virginal aspect of the Greek representations.

The interpretation of these elements as breasts is the oldest and most widespread, but other suggestions are that they could be bunches of grapes, eggs, dates or bull testicles. It is thought that bull sacrifices played a central role in the cult of the goddess. To date, no bull sacrificing cult has been documented in the written sources on Ephesus. However, bull sacrifices were prevalent in Asia Minor from antiquity and went back to the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium, on the basis of representations associating the bull with a feminine deity. From the archaic period, there is proof of the existence of bull sacrifices in the cult of Artemis. Moreover, a sacrificial altar was discovered near the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus. As bulls were considered to symbolise fertility, it is relevant to see in our statue of Artemis an image of nature, life and fertility.

The Ephesian goddess was, in fact, closely linked to the “Magna Mater”, a Phrygian mother goddess also known as Cybele. Both deities probably even share a common origin. From a religious and iconographic standpoint, there are many similarities between the goddesses: the sacrifice of bull testicles is also linked to the cult of the Mater,

both deities wear a mural crown and Cybele is generally represented with lions, as she embodied wild nature and fertility. If we consider the statuary examples of Artemis of Ephesus that survive today (Ill. 3-11), we see that when the arms are conserved, they serve as supports for lions. Thus, we may legitimately assume that both our goddess’ forearms were extended, supporting two lions.



Ill. 3. Statue of the Ephesian Artemis, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, Pentelic marble with restorations in black marble, H.: 123 cm. Sir John Soane’s Museum, London, inv. no. M613.

Ill. 4. Artemis of Ephesus, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century, white and black marble. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Naples, inv. no. 6278

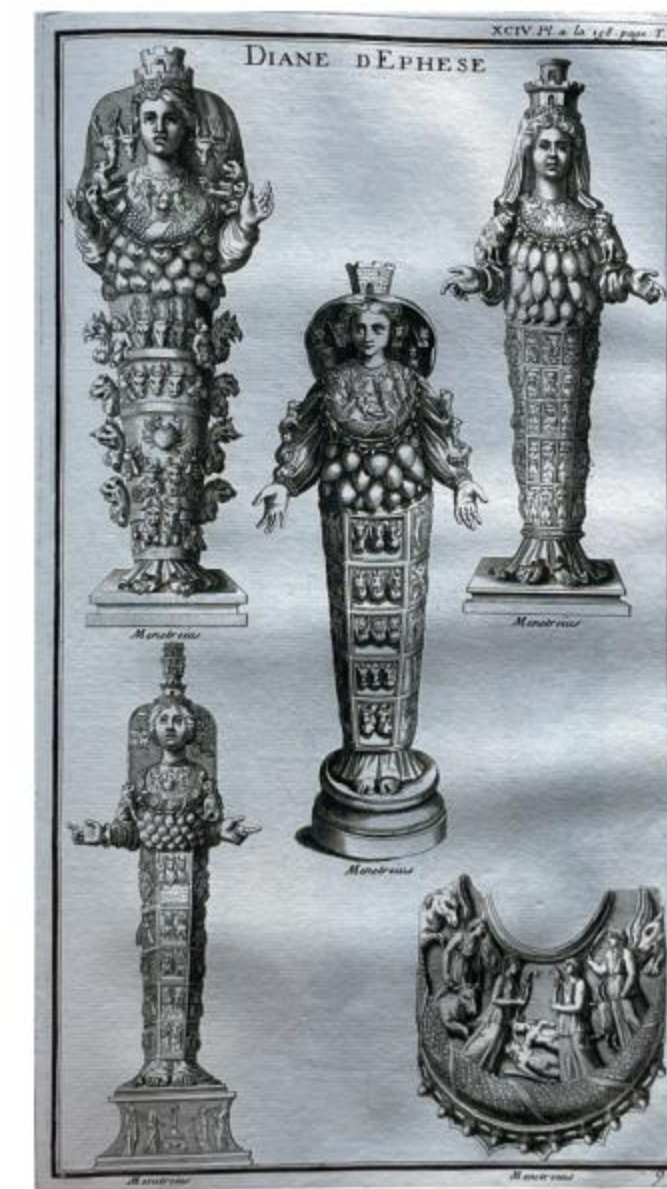


Ill. 5. Artemis of Ephesus, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century, after an original from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, marble and bronze, H.: 115 cm. Capitoline Museums, Rome, inv. no. MC1182.

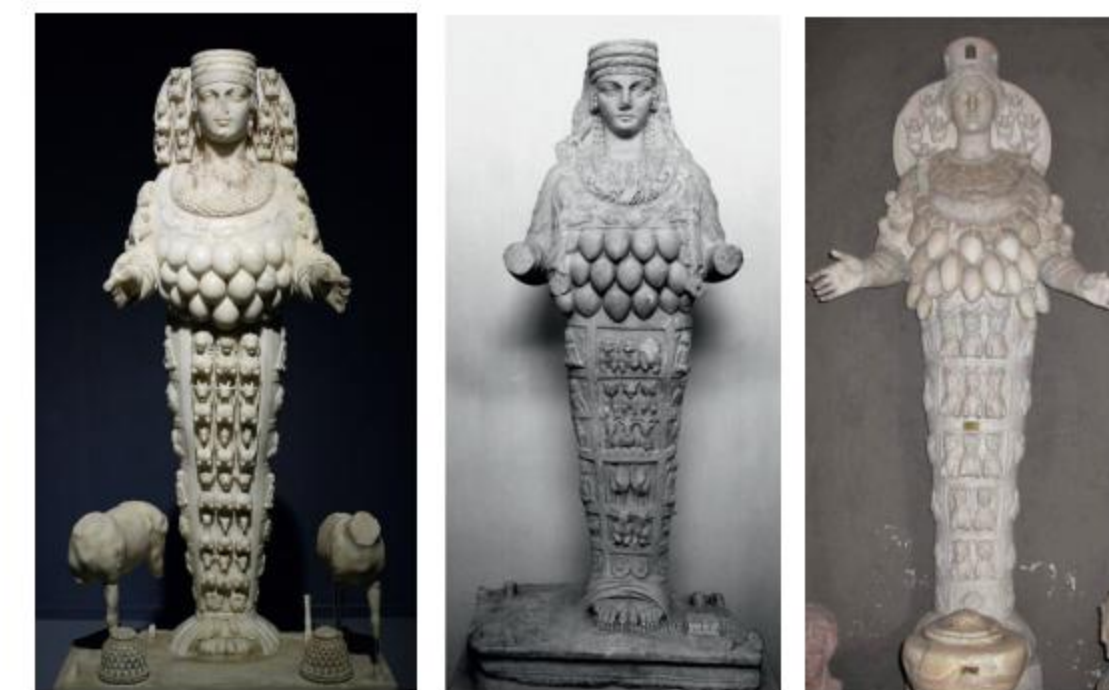
Ill. 6. Artemis of Ephesus, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, white and black marble, Fondazione Torlonia, Rome, inv. no. MT 483.







Ill. 7. Bernard De Montfaucon, *L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures*, Tome I, 1719, planche 94



Ill. 8. Artemis of Ephesus known as "the beautiful Artemis", Roman, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 174.5 cm.

Ephesus Archaeological Museum, Selçuk, Turkey, inv. no. 718.

Ill. 9. Artemis of Ephesus, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 140 cm. Archaeological Museum, Tripoli, Libya, inv. no. 150.

Ill. 10. Artemis of Ephesus, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, after a Greek original from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Marble, H.: 190 cm. Pio Clementino Museum, Rome, inv. no. MV2505.0.0.



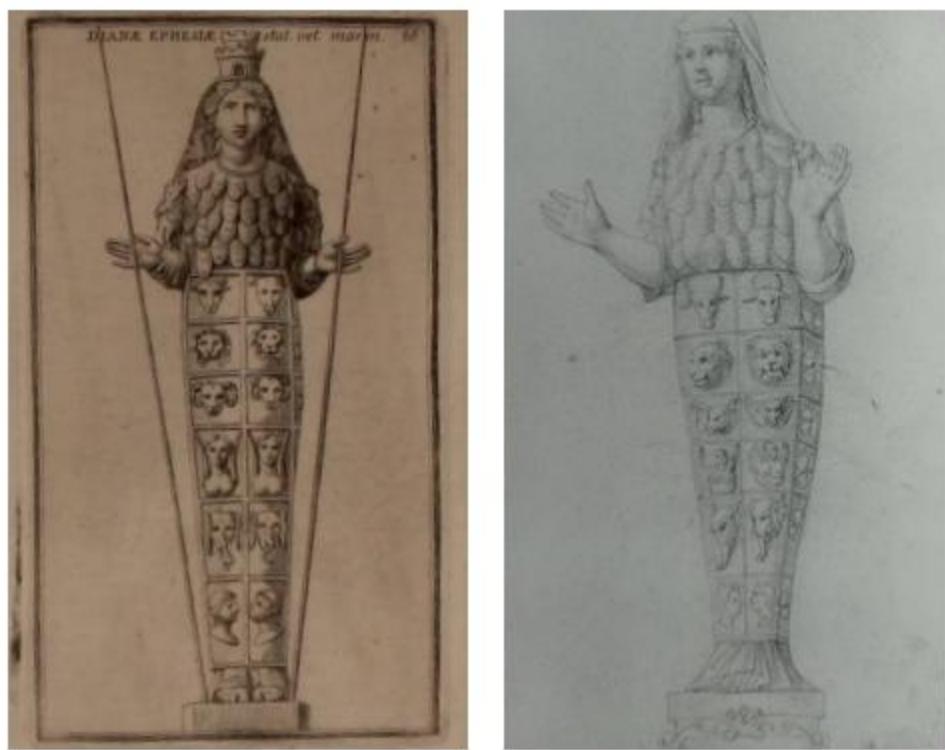
Ill. 11. Artemis of Ephesus, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Gregoriano Profano Museum, Rome.

The restorations of our Artemis of Ephesus, particularly those of the feet and the base, present characteristics reminiscent of another Artemis preserved at the Gregorio Profano Museum (Ill. 11). Both feature the same moulded, crenelated, architectural element, which separates the bottom of the ependytes from the feet. Below this structural element is an extensively pleated, flared section of clothing, from which her toes and part of her feet peep out. The latter, left bare on our Artemis and adorned with sandals on the Vatican's example – the only difference between the two – are set flat upon a small, architectural, square base. Incidentally, it seems that several examples of Artemis of Ephesus display the same types of restorations: one, in the Montalto collection at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and currently in the Torlonia collection (Ill. 12); the other, in the Giustiniani collection in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, lost following its sale on the Neapolitan art market in the 1930s, but known to us today through a drawing (Ill. 13). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that both the statue of the Torlonia collection



and ours were used as models for an engraving of Artemis of Ephesus in a work by Romeyn de Hoogh, published in 1735 (Ill. 14). We discern the same typology for the bottom of the ependytes, the feet and the base. The abovementioned restorations are thus in line with a particular type that includes these three different examples. The research we have conducted on these restorations leads us to believe that a 17<sup>th</sup>-century restorer or restoration workshop worked on these sculptures, contributing to the creation of a distinctive style.

Sculpted from a large grained white marble, our splendid Ephesian Artemis is of an unparalleled elegance. Its hieratic attitude, the gentleness it exudes and the refinement of its details make it a true masterpiece of ancient sculpture. The delicacy of the sculpture is accentuated by a subtle patina, a testament to the goddess' journey through time.



Ill. 12. Torlonia collection, in Dominique Magnan, *La ville de Rome, ou description abrégée de cette superbe ville [...]*, Vol. I, 1778, Fig. 66.

Same object, in Anna Seidel, *Der Codex Montalto, Präsentation und Rezeption der Antikensammlung Peretti Montalto*, 2016, Fig. 118.



Ill. 13. Giustiniani collection, Claudio Menetreo, *Symbolica Dianæ Ephesiæ Statua*, Rome, 1688, pl. 10.  
Ill. 14. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Hieroglyphica of Merckbeelden der oude volkeren: namentlyk Egyptenaren, Chaldeeuwen, Feniciers, Joden, Grieken, Romeynen, enz. [...]*, Amsterdam, 1735.

A plaster version of the Artemis of Ephesus exists in the collections of Sir John Soane's Museum in London (Ill. 17), which was identified in 1835, by Soane himself, as a cast of a Greek original, once in the collection of Rundell & Bridge, London jewellers and goldsmiths. Philip Rundell (1746-1827) and John Bridge (1754-1834) became partners and obtained the position of Royal Goldsmiths & Jewellers in 1804 until 1843. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Philip Rundell had one of the ten largest fortunes in England. It actually transpired that the original – Roman, not Greek – that was sold by the two goldsmiths was probably our sculpture of the Ephesian Artemis. Both of the cast goddess' arms are conserved and support two lions, thus confirming the hypothesis we put forward above. The work was then part of the personal collection of Robert Kime (1946-2022; Ill. 15). The British interior designer,







who was close to the English royal family, worked on six of the royal residences, including Highgrove and Clarence House on behalf of King Charles III. A great amateur of ancient art and an antiquarian in his youth, Kime amassed a vast collection of various works over the course of his life, divided between his provincial house and his residence in Warwick Square in London. Our statue was displayed in the entrance hall of the latter (Ill. 16).



Ill. 15. Robert Kime (1946-2022).



Ill. 16. Our statue displayed in the entrance hall of Robert Kime's house in Warwick Square.



Ill. 17. Plaster cast of a statue of the Ephesian Diana, said to be after a Greek marble original, previously in the collection of Rundell Bridge & Co., 1834. Sir John Soane's Museum, London, inv. no. SC51.





# TORSO OF APOLLO

ROMAN, 1<sup>ST</sup> – 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY AD

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 92 CM.

WIDTH: 51 CM.

DEPTH: 26 CM.

PROVENANCE:

FORMER EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

BASED ON THE RESTORATION TECHNIQUES.

THEN IN A FRENCH PRIVATE COLLECTION FROM THE 1960S, IN A PROPERTY IN ALLIER.

THEN PASSED DOWN AS AN HEIRLOOM IN THE 2000S.

A young man with an athletic physique is depicted through this appealing marble torso. It could be an adaptation of Praxiteles' Apollo Sauroktonos. The young man is portrayed in an energetic attitude, bust leaning to the left and right hip tilted upwards. He seems to be resting on something. His musculature is showcased through prominent obliques and lightly pronounced abdominals. In the middle of his abdomen, a shallowly carved navel seems to be integrated into the surrounding muscular structure, with clear-cut contours that add to the athletic appearance of his body. His partially conserved left arm is held out from his body, as indicated by the position of his shoulder. It used to rest on a tree

trunk, part of which still remains. His right arm is positioned along his body. A slight mark on his hip suggests that his right elbow or forearm could have rested there. The shoulders of the young man are draped in a chlamys, a light mantle worn in antiquity by the Greeks and then the Romans, which covered the upper shoulders. Similarly, to the famous Apollo Belvedere statue (Ill. 1) conserved in the Vatican, the mantle was often twined around one arm, bestowing a noble appearance upon the wearer. Here, the garment is tucked around its wearer's shoulder and forms a lovely knot before cascading down. Fastened over our statue's chest by a button, the chlamys covers his pectorals with





Ill. 1. Apollo Belvedere, after a bronze original by Leochares (ca. 330 BC), Roman, Hadrianic – Antonine period, H.: 224 cm. Museo Pio Clementino, Vatican.

wide folds that are deeply carved into the marble. It then continues on over his upper back with slightly less accentuated folds. This dynamic drapery technique, characteristic of Graeco-Roman statuary, gives our fabric a certain realism and illustrates the exceptional mastery of the artists of the time, who were capable of transforming hard stone into a fabric that looks soft and supple. The line running down the middle of our young man's back, delicately etched and with a particularly athletic aspect, makes the statue look all the more strikingly realistic. Unlike that of an adult man, whose muscles would be more pronounced and salient, our torso, despite a great many athletic features, is softly shaped and radiates a palpable sensuality. Each feature is placed subtly and thoughtfully to create a lifelike illusion that emanates beauty. That sensual aspect is also due to the twist of the bust and the delicacy with which the spine unfolds, coming to an end at particularly defined lumbar muscles and round buttocks. The young man's bust and pelvis are narrow and almost of the same width. His right hip is tilted upwards slightly,

delicately indicating his waist, and his legs are close together, in a position that, while static, conveys both seduction and charm. This ancient statue brilliantly embodies the art of *contrapposto*, a technique developed by the Greek sculptor Polykleitos in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Its distinctive pose is characterised by a subtle distribution of the weight of the body, creating a balance that is both dynamic and natural. The young man's right leg would have supported his weight, while the left would be slightly bent and ahead of the right. That arrangement creates a harmonious tilt of the hips, accentuated by a twist of the torso. The right shoulder is held back slightly, in contrast with the forward left leg, creating a rotation of the body. *Contrapposto*, with the shoulders and hips moving in opposite directions, gives the figure an illusion of movement and life. The body's position, with its weight resting on the supporting leg and the other leg bent, is a brilliant demonstration of the technical and aesthetic mastery of the Graeco-Roman sculptors of the time. The original brown patina gives the statue a certain aura, conferred by centuries of wear and attesting to its age and history.

Graeco-Roman art attached great importance to the representation and glorification of the masculine body, particularly through sculptures depicting young men. Although the identification of our work is difficult, it seems to be a variant of Praxiteles' Apollo Sauroktonos (Ill. 2). As in that famous representation, our statue displays a relaxed, nonchalant attitude. The slimness of the young man's figure, with his narrow pelvis, is reminiscent of the







slender sinuosity of Praxiteles' Apollo. A key feature is that the young man of our sculpture is leaning on a tree trunk, a detail directly inspired by Apollo Sauroktonos. Details such as the way the chlamys is worn, the discreet muscles and the movement and grace of the body only lend credence to the hypothesis that our statue is a representation of Apollo, or was, at the very least, inspired by the same aesthetic ideal.



Ill. 2. Apollo Sauroktonos, after the bronze original by Praxiteles in 350 BC, Roman, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 167 cm.  
Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Praxiteles, one of the most famous sculptors of ancient Greece, lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. He was particularly renowned for his graceful, lifelike representations of gods and mythological figures. Apollo Sauroktonos, one of his most famous works, depicts the god about to kill a lizard. The statue is admired for its relaxed pose and the innovative way Praxiteles captured a moment of potential movement in a static posture. The tree trunk against which Praxiteles' Apollo was leaning has often been interpreted as both a structural and a symbolic element, adding to the visual and narrative dynamic of the sculpture. Another torso of the god, displayed within the collections of the Staatliche Museen,

Antikensammlung Berlin (Ill. 3), also seems to have commonalities with our work, particularly in the movement of the body.



Ill.3. Torso of Apollo, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble.  
Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung Berlin.

Our statue was part of a French private collection from the 1960s and was housed in a property in Allier. It was passed down in the 1990's (Ill. 4). We also note that the surfaces of the neck and limbs were once prepared for restoration, although those restorations are now missing, indicating the intention to conserve and preserve it at a certain time.



Ill.4. Our sculpture in a property in Allier in the 1990's.









# CUIRASS OF AN EMPEROR

ROMAN, FLAVIAN PERIOD, 3<sup>RD</sup> QUARTER OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AD

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 120 CM.

WIDTH: 48 CM.

DEPTH: 40 CM.

## PROVENANCE:

PRIVATE COLLECTION, SALE "THE PROPERTY OF A GENTLEMAN",  
SOTHEBY'S LONDON, 27 MARCH 1961, LOT 151.

SWISS PRIVATE COLLECTION PROBABLY THE OWNER AT THE TIME  
OF THE ABOVEMENTIONED SALE.

SOTHEBY'S LONDON, 6 JULY 1964, LOT 175.

DODIE ROSEKRANS (1919-2010), SAN FRANCISCO.

SOTHEBY'S NEW YORK, PROPERTY FROM DODIE ROSEKRANS' COLLECTION,  
8 DECEMBER 2011, LOT 134.

MOUGINS MUSEUM OF CLASSIC ART, ACQUIRED AT THE ABOVEMENTIONED SALE.

Our marble sculpture, originally part of a large imperial portrait, shows the figure of a cuirassed emperor, typical of the Flavian period. The posture of the subject tells us that the emperor was represented standing, the weight of his body resting on his right leg, creating a slight tilt of his hips. He was likely leaning against a fragmentary

support. The statue's imposing dimensions lead us to conclude that it was larger than life.

The emperor is represented wearing armour (the cuirassus), a garment symbolic of military power. He is wearing a tunic, corselet and leather loincloth, as well as a bronze breastplate imitating ideal male musculature, known as an anatomical, heroic or



muscle cuirass. This metallic element is decorated with relief motifs recalling the emperor's majesty and victory, with symbols that could refer to mythological scenes or military allegories. Thus, in the upper part, over the chest, is a Gorgon's head. The relief on the lower part of the cuirass represents a *tropaion* or trophy, a memorial that, in line with ancient Greek custom, the Roman army would erect on the battleground at the very spot where the enemy turned to flee. On this sacred site, which was consecrated, some of the enemy's weapons, helmets, shields and other pieces of armour were suspended from a wooden cross (Ill. 1). The defeated barbarians, such as the one recognisable by his trousers and long beard, were placed on display next to the trophy. Our sculpture thus features a cuirass and a helmet placed upon a pole, surrounded by two shields. On the right, a barbarian has his hands tied behind his back. He has a beard and is wearing the thick cap characteristic of Germanic peoples. He is thus a war captive. On the other side, a man wearing a long drapery seems to be swearing allegiance to the cuirass



Ill. 1. Trophy relief fragment, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble,  
H.: 69 cm. The Metropolitan Museum, New York,  
inv. no. 2021.264.1.

in the middle by raising his right arm in the direction of the armour – he is probably a Roman. At their feet, various objects and weapons are piled, representing the spoils of war. Under the breastplate, with its anatomical shapes, hang leather lappets – *pteruges*. Each is adorned with an animal or symbolic motif. We thus again recognise the *gorgoneion* or Gorgon's head in the middle, as well as many other motifs that were common in the iconographic repertory of ancient Rome: two crossed swords, two crossed shields, a panther's head in profile, a lion's head, an eagle with outstretched wings, a ram's head in profile, a tiger's head and a star emitting rays of light. The lower *pteruges* are adorned with more conventional foliate motifs such as honeysuckle and palmettes. A thick draped garment can be seen under the cuirass, represented through a multitude of folds, hinting at superposed layers of fabric. The fabric is finished with pleated fringes, rendered with a chisel in particularly realistic detail.

The realism of the sculpture is striking: the muscles on the breastplate are meticulously shaped and the attitude of the body hints at an imposing posture, befitting imperial dignity. The size of the fragment incites us to imagine a monumental statue, probably intended to be placed in a public space to remind citizens of the emperor's power and stature. We may, incidentally, assume that this is a representation of Titus or Domitian (Ill. 2-3) through comparison. Similar examples of complete statues depict the emperor standing, leaning against a support, which is most frequently a tree trunk (Ill. 4-5). The Flavian







period, which began with Vespasian in AD 69 following a violent civil war, ushered in a significant change in imperial representation. While the Julio-Claudian emperors such as Augustus and Tiberius



Ill. 2. Statue of a cuirassed Marcus Aurelius, body from the Flavian period: 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 228 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Ma 1137.

Ill. 3. Statue of Titus (?), Flavian period, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 236 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Ma 1067.



Ill. 4. Cuirassed Trajan, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 222 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. Ma 1150.

Ill. 5. Statue of a cuirassed emperor with the head of Domitian, body from the Julio-Claudian period, head of Domitian recut from a head of Nero, marble, H.: 184 cm. Municipal Museum, Vaison-la-Romaine, inv. no. 63 A.F. and 58 A.F.

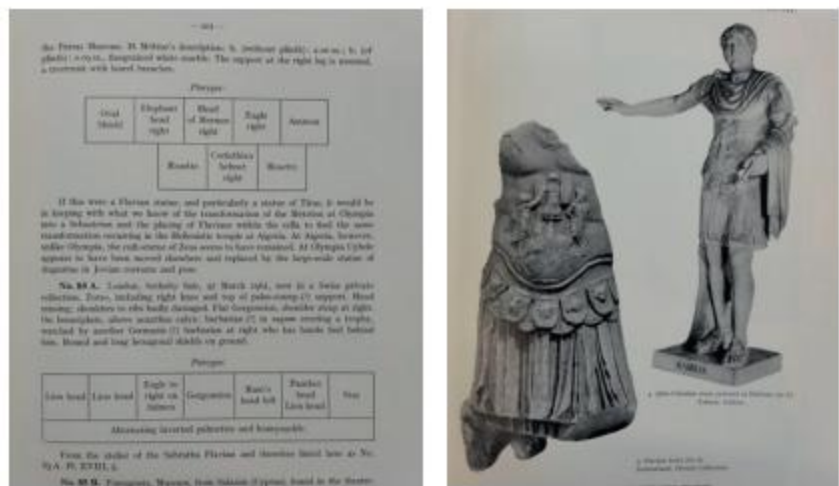
had insisted on the dynastic and “civil” aspect of power, the Flavians placed more emphasis on the military and victorious nature of the emperor. The Flavians, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, were all represented in postures that expressed their roles as

war leaders and protectors of the State. Roman artists used carefully chosen iconographic representations to glorify the emperor and his victories, transforming art into a powerful tool for propaganda. Through statues, bas-reliefs and frescoes, the imperial image was regularly associated with symbols of divine power, stability and prosperity. Thus, Roman art served to reinforce the idea that imperial authority was unquestionable, legitimate and in service to the greatness of Rome. This sculpture is in line with that iconographic strategy, emphasising the emperor’s martial power, a crucial aspect of imperial legitimacy. The emperor was not only a civil sovereign, but also a victorious general, the guarantor of the security and prosperity of the Empire. Armour, apart from its practical use, thus became a powerful symbol of imperial authority. Our sculpture, although fragmentary, is a remarkable example of imperial art under the Flavians, illustrating both the stylistic changes and the political concerns of the period. Through his adorned cuirass, the emperor is not only a man but a mythological, quasi-divine figure whose strength and power are expressed by the sculpture itself. Such works contributed to anchoring the image of imperial power in the minds of the Roman citizenry, thereby cementing the legitimacy of the Flavians and their place in the history of the Roman Empire.

Sculpted from a very pure, fine-grained white marble, over the years, our sculpture has taken on a magnificent patina, imbuing it with a great softness. The rendering of the different elements of the cuirass, the attention to detail, the meticulous



execution of the different materials and the resulting play of shadow and light attest to the great mastery of the artist who created this sculpture.



Ill. 6-7. Cornelius Vermeule, Statues cuirassées hellénistiques et romaines : un supplément, in Berytus, Vol. 15, 1964.

Our superb cuirass was part of a private collection, probably Swiss, according to the 1964 publication by Cornelius Vermeule, in which the work is illustrated and captioned “now in a Swiss private collection” (Ill. 8). The sculpture was presented at auction at Sotheby’s London twice, in 1961 then 1964, before joining the collection of Dodie Rosekrans (1919-2010), an American philanthropist known for her eclectic taste and discerning eye (Ill. 9-10). Her three residences in San Francisco, Paris and Venice were thus decorated with Egyptian, Asian and African works, French furniture from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, design pieces and works by Picasso. In 1998, Dodie Rosekrans received the Légion d’Honneur for supporting and contributing to the development of several French museums, including the Centre Pompidou. Upon her death, Sotheby’s New York held the sale of her collection in December 2011, when our cuirassed torso of an emperor was acquired by Mougins Classic Art Museum. The work was exhibited at Mougins Museum and lent to other museums for temporary exhibitions, before finding its way to our collections.



Ill. 8. Dodie Rosekrans (1919-2010)  
Ill. 9. Our torso in Dodie Rosekrans’ residence.

Publications:

- Cornelius Vermeule, Statues cuirassées hellénistiques et romaines : un supplément, Berytus, Vol. 15, 1964, p. 101, No. 85A, Pl. 18.5
- Klaus Stemmer, Untersuchungen zur Typologie, Chronologie und Ikonographie der Panzerstatuen, Berlin, 1978, p. 19, Cat. I 19, Pl. 10.1.
- Helga Herdejürgen, Stadtrömische und italische Girlandensarkophage (Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs, VI, 2,1, Berlin, 1996, p. 80, note 151.
- Katia Schörle, Ed., L’armée de Rome : la puissance et la gloire, Arles, 2018, p. 31, No. 5.
- Jonathan Coulston, Le pouvoir et la gloire, Minerva, March/April 2019, p.18, No.4,
- L. Romero, J. Andreu and M. del M. Gabaldón, Un thoracatus impérial en Los Bañales (Uncastillo, Saragosse), Zephyr, Vol. 73, 2014, p. 201, Fig. 6, No. 15.

Exhibition:

Mougins Museum of Classic Art, inv. no. MMoCA783, 2011-2023.







# STATUE OF A BOY

ROMAN, CIRCA 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY AD

MARBLE

RESTORATIONS ATTRIBUTED TO LEANDRO BIGLIOSCHI (ACTIVE 1813–1832)

HEIGHT: 61.7 CM.

WIDTH: 70 CM.

DEPTH: 49 CM.

## PROVENANCE:

FOUND IN THE IL ROSAIO DE' PADRI MISSIONARI VINEYARD OUTSIDE  
PORTA PORTESE IN ROME IN MAY 1827.

FORMERLY IN THE COLLECTION OF THE SCULPTOR LEANDRO BIGLIOSCHI, ROME.

ACQUIRED IN 1840 BY THE KÖNIGLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN.

SOLD IN 1922 TO PHILIPP LEDERER AND GÜMÜSCHDJIAN, BERLIN, AND REILING, MAINZ,  
WHO JOINTLY ACQUIRED IT FROM THE ABOVEMENTIONED MUSEUMS.

THEN IN A GERMAN PRIVATE COLLECTION, FROM 1953.

IN A GERMAN PRIVATE COLLECTION, BY DESCENT FROM THE ABOVE.

This Roman sculpture in white marble, dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, represents a young child sitting on a rock in an attitude that radiates gentleness and spontaneity. The sculpture also illustrates a certain naturalism. Particular attention was paid to each anatomical detail, which gives the work a great delicacy. His head, tilted to the left, brushes his shoulder, while his short, wavy hair frames his face. His slightly lowered gaze is directed towards the

ground. He is hugging a bunch of grapes to his chest. Grapes are a symbol associated with Dionysus, god of fertility, abundance and earthly pleasures, and this bunch is the central element of the composition. His left hand supports the bunch at its base, while his right hand is splayed firmly over the upper part in a gesture that is both protective and instinctive. The child is represented in the act of recoiling. This detail attests to the sculptor's talent for reproducing



such a lively scene. The plump shapes of his body, accentuated by delicate curves, are sublimed by a subtle play of shapes and textures. The slight folds around his chest and stomach, as well as the natural sag of his stomach onto his right leg, translate a particular attention to the representation of baby fat, grounded in a quest for realism. His lightly etched navel and full, voluminous thighs further add to this aesthetic, exalting the softness inherent to youth. Our child is represented naked, with a visible sex; a detail that adds to the figure's authenticity. His carefully executed posture appears both balanced and natural. His right leg is extended while the left is curled inwards, creating a bodily dynamic that suggests movement while lending the piece a feeling of grace and life. The flat rock making up the child's seat has oval contours and is in slight relief. The child's position upon it is asymmetrical, his buttocks occupying one end of the rock while his right foot reaches towards the other. His left heel is touching the middle of the rock, completing a carefully studied triangular composition. Through this arrangement, the body of the child and his seat are in harmony, emphasising the interaction between the figure and his immediate environment. The beautifully rendered details and textures of this sculpture, carved from a particularly polished white marble, illustrate the artist's technical mastery. The meticulously carved grapes and round shapes of the youthful body showcase the artist's expertise and attachment to an idealised realism inherited from Hellenistic art. The particularly luminous surface of the marble is sublimed by a delicate patina.

Our statue displays several visible restorations, attesting to its history and the attention given to its conservation. The head, neck, part of the right forearm, fingers of the right hand, left foot, vine leaves and right leg from the knee down have been restored. These alterations, probably carried out by Leandro Biglioschi in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, underline the importance given to the conservation of this work.

The iconography of a child holding a bunch of grapes evokes two possible mythological figures: Dionysus (Bacchus), the incarnation of fertility and wine, or Eros (Cupid), deity of love and desire. This figure probably depicts Dionysus. Such works were often used to decorate the gardens of Roman villas and banquet halls. By exalting bucolic and mythological themes, they contributed to glorifying nature and the pleasures of life. Grapes, as a metaphor for abundance and prosperity, reinforced that hedonistic theme. Our sculpture was probably inspired by a Greek original, as were many similar works, attesting to the dissemination and adaptation of this statuary type in antiquity.

A first comparison can be made with a sculpture preserved at the National Museum of Denmark, dating from between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and discovered near Taranto (Ill. 1). This work also takes up the motif of a child holding a bunch of grapes, although it is noticeably different from our sculpture due to the inclined position of the child's body, which changes the balance of the composition while preserving the essence of the subject. The sculptural







group at Łańcut Castle (Ill. 2) also merits a mention, as it includes the body of a youthful Dionysus holding a bunch of grapes from the Roman period. The composition is quite different and features ancient elements and later additions. The group was assembled in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and acquired by Princess Izabela Lubomirska upon her visit to Rome from 1785 to 1786. Prior to that, it was located at the famous Villa Negroni, an important landmark for the ancient art market in Rome. The work attests to the enduring fascination of the European elites for ancient themes and models, altered to cater to the tastes of their time.

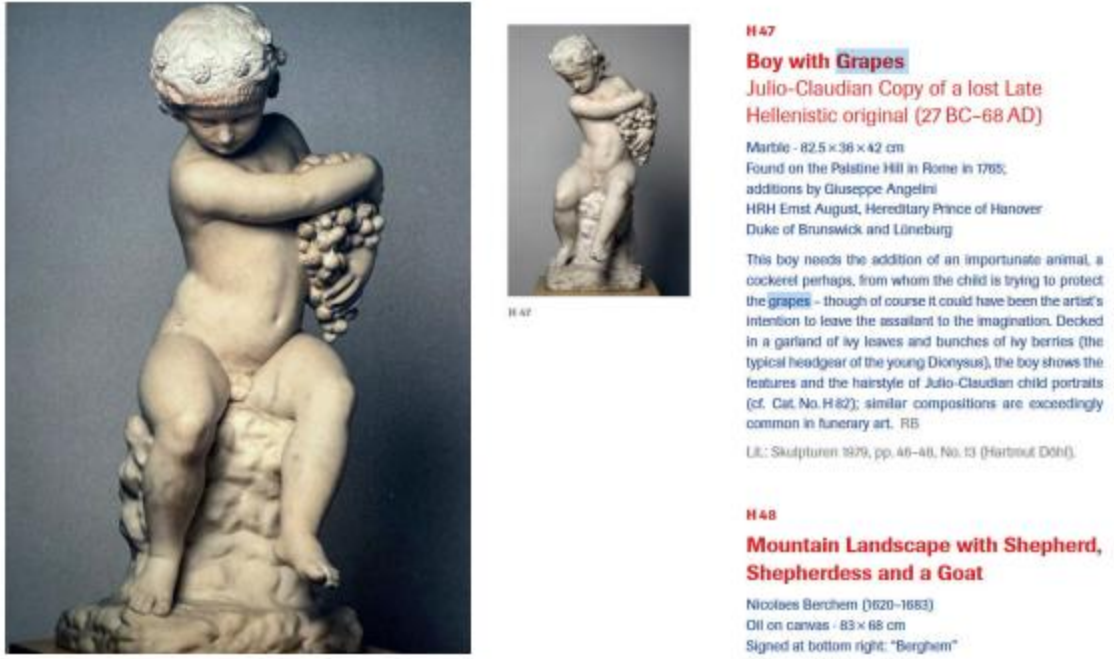


Ill.1. Child holding a bunch of grapes, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 59 cm. National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen, inv. no. VIII 302 (found near Taranto).

Ill.2. Dionysus astride a panther, Roman, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble. Łańcut Castle, Poland. Group assembled in the 18<sup>th</sup> century

A sculpture from the Wallmoden collection in Germany, dating from the Julio-Claudian period (27 BC–AD 68) and considered to be a Roman copy of a Hellenistic original (Ill. 3), also serves as a reference. It, too, features the motif of a child holding a bunch of grapes, with the right hand placed in a similar way.

However, in this case, the child is represented on a higher rock, which significantly changes the visual impact and perception of the scene. Finally, the example conserved at the J. Paul Getty Museum (Ill. 4) is the most similar to our sculpture. The child's general posture, the arrangement of his legs and the exact gesture of hugging the bunch of grapes to his chest resonate almost perfectly with our work. This striking similarity suggests that a common ancient model existed, most likely created in the Hellenistic period.



Ill.3. Child holding a bunch of grapes, Roman, Julio-Claudian period, copy made in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD after a Hellenistic original (27 BC–AD 58), marble, H.: 82.5 cm. Wallmoden collection.



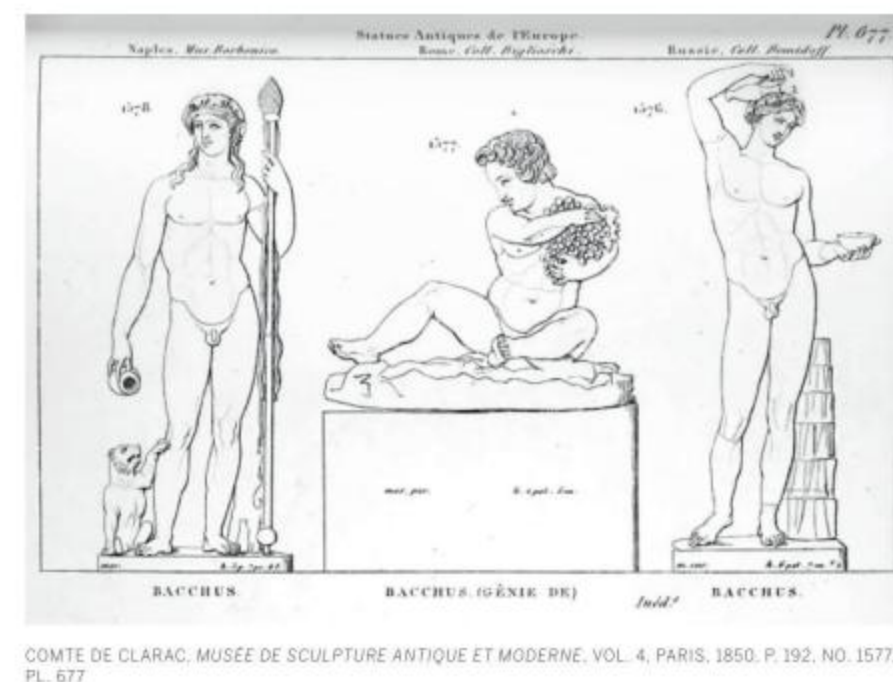
Ill. 4. Statue of a boy with grapes, first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H. : 61 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa collection.



Our sculpture, discovered in the Il Rosaio de' Padri Missionari vineyard outside Porta Portese (Ill. 5) in Rome in 1827, attests to that period's fascination for antiquity. Archaeological digs, which were in full swing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, generously supplied private and public collections. The sculpture was added to the collection of the sculptor and restorer Leandro Biglioschi, a major figure in the conservation of antique sculptures and one of Antonio Canova's assistants. Named Regent of the Virtuosi al Pantheon (the Pope's honour society for artists) in 1821, Biglioschi played a major role in the conservation of ancient works. Before that distinction, Canova himself had commissioned Biglioschi to sculpt four marble busts for the Pantheon, currently preserved at the Capitoline Museums. It is likely that Biglioschi restored our statue. In his work *Musée de sculpture antique et moderne* published in 1850, the Comte de Clarac referred to our sculpture as belonging to Leandro Biglioschi and as representing a young Dionysus (Ill. 6). In 1840, the sculpture was acquired by the Königlische Museen in Berlin (Ill. 7), joining a collection of major works. In 1922, however, in the context of extensive sales made by museums in Berlin, it was sold to art traders (Philipp Lederer, Gümüşdjian and Reiling). It was then acquired in 1953 by a German private collector, who passed it down by descent.



Ill.5. Porta Portese, Rome.



III.6. Comte de Clarac, *Musée de sculpture antique et moderne*,  
Vol. 4, Paris, 1850, p. 192, no. 1577, pl. 677.

483		Attkleb, Binde h. 6494, 72999
	46	Aus Kom
484		Attklehenkopf, h. 624
	265	L. Pelignac
485		Domäuzieker, Statue h. 9585
	157, 526	Villa Aldebandini
486		Krinke m. e. Brinabake, Statue h. 6625 ag. 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527,

III.7. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, acquisition logs for the antiquities collection, Division of ancient sculptures and plaster casts. Sculpture inventory. N. 1-1000, 1766-1884, p. 14 of.







Publications:

- Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Erwerbungsbücher der Antikensammlung, Abteilung Antike Skulpturen und Gipsabgüsse. Inventar der Skulpturen, I. N. 1-1000, 1766-1884, p. 140f.
- Friedrich Tieck, Königliche Museen. Verzeichniss der antiken Bildhauerwerke, Berlin, 1847, p. 19, no. 138.
- Comte de Clarac, Musée de sculpture antique et moderne, Vol. 4, Paris, 1850, p. 192, no. 1577, pl. 677.
- Alexander Conze, Königliche Museen zu Berlin. Verzeichniss der antiken Skulpturen, Berlin, 1885, p. 89, no. 486.
- Alexander Conze, Königliche Museen zu Berlin. Beschreibung der antiken Skulpturen, Berlin, 1891, p. 188f., no. 486, illus.
- Klaus Fittschen and Johannes Bergemann (Eds), Katalog der Skulpturen der Sammlung Wallmoden, Munich, 2015, p. 63, note 3, Beilage 8c.





# FUNERARY ALTAR FOR PUBLIUS THIASUS

ROMAN, CIRCA END OF 1<sup>ST</sup> - BEGINNING OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY AD

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 120.6 CM.	WIDTH: 72 CM.	DEPTH: 64 CM.
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PROVENANCE:

DISCOVERED IN MAY 1861 ON THE APPIAN WAY IN ALBANUM  
(PRESENT-DAY ALBANO LAZIALE).  
FORMERLY IN THE COLLECTION OF THOMAS SHIELDS CLARKE (1860–1920),  
AMERICAN PAINTER AND SCULPTOR, AT FERNBROOK ESTATE, LENOX, MASSACHUSETTS,  
ACQUIRED AT THE END OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> BEGINNING OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY;  
THE ALTAR REMAINED IN SITU AT FERNBROOK UNTIL THE 1970S,  
WHEN THE PROPERTY WAS PURCHASED BY AVALON SCHOOLS.  
WITH THE BRADFORD AUCTION GALLERY, SHEFFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS.  
PRIVATE COLLECTION OF LEE ELMAN (1936–2022), ACQUIRED FROM THE FORMER AT AN  
AUCTION TOWARDS THE MIDDLE OF THE 1970S AND INSTALLED IN ASTON MAGNA, GREAT  
BARRINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS.  
THEN PASSED DOWN BY DESCENT.  
THEN IN AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION UNTIL 2023, ACQUIRED FROM THE FORMER.

This Roman funerary altar presents a rectangular structure surmounted by a triangular pediment adorned with stylised floral motifs, probably foliated	scrolls and rosettes, as well as spirals. The flat main face is framed by sculpted pilasters and bears a funerary inscription in Latin, carefully engraved
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within a rectangular frame. The inscription, dedicated to Publius Novius Thiasus, also mentions its commissioner, Publius Novius Callistus, and attests to a posthumous act respecting testamentary provisions.

P. NOVIO  
P. L. THIASO  
P. NOVIUS  
CALLISTUS  
FECIT  
EX TESTAMENTO  
VS SVB AFRONI

This inscription can be translated as follows: “To Publius Novius Thiasus, freedman of Publius. Publius Novius Callistus had [this altar] built according to the testament [and] on the order of his patron”. This means that the first person referred to was a freedman, i.e., a former slave, of the Novii family, who adopted the name of his former master. Publius Novius Callistus, who commissioned the altar, was, himself, a freedman, having probably belonged to Thiasus before being freed. As a patronus, Thiasus perhaps included in his testament the obligation for Callistus to erect the altar in his honour. The last line of the inscription is incomplete and open to interpretation, but it could designate a use clause or a specific location linked to the monument. The lateral faces of the altar are decorated with various plant motifs such as rosettes and stylised foliate elements, which add to the ornamental, sacred dimension of the altar,

attesting to the care that went into its construction and the importance accorded to the memory of the deceased. One of the sides presents a Latin inscription added at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by its owner. The posterior face, often less visible, nevertheless displays meticulous decoration, a sign that the altar could have been placed in such a way that it could be viewed from several angles. There again, there is a moulded frame, perhaps intended for another inscription or a painted element, as well as volutes and geometric motifs, contributing to the aesthetic balance of the piece.

Funerary altars make up a distinct category of Roman funerary monuments, between the simple stele and the monumental sarcophagus. Very common during the Roman Empire, they were mainly dedicated to the memory of the deceased and served as commemorative points for family rites. They were often placed on tombs or in columbaria, places where funerary urns were stored. Generally rectangular, they were sometimes surmounted by a pediment and decorated with lateral pilasters, imitating secular and religious architecture. They mostly displayed figurative reliefs (deities, funerary scenes, ceremonial objects, etc.) and foliate motifs (garlands, foliate scrolls, etc.). Some extant examples feature portraits of the deceased. The main face always displayed an inscription mentioning the deceased and their origins (citizen or freedman) and sometimes including a text expressing a dedication or an appeal to passersby. The type of our funerary altar was thus quite common;







many similar examples can be found in various museums, such as those preserved at the Louvre (Ill. 1 and 2). The characteristic form of the Latin inscription engraved within a rectangular frame and surrounded with architectural elements such as spirals can be recognised in many other altars (Ill. 3–6). These comparisons enable us to place the altar of Publius Novius Thiasus within Roman tradition. Moreover, it reflects the importance of social status in Rome, where freedmen formed a large class, between slavery and citizenship, and sometimes retained obligations to their former masters. Thiasus, as a patron, had freed Callistus through manumission, and the latter had then taken care to execute his testament. Funerary dedications are of surpassing importance, as they make it possible to learn more about the family structures and social practices of ancient Rome. They also illustrate the ties between freedmen and former masters, as well as the latter’s preoccupation with ensuring their memory lived on in their community.



- Ill. 1. Altar dedicated to Cybele by Julius Italicus, Roman, 13 April 305, marble, H.: 104.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. Ma 1369.
- Ill. 2. Funerary altar dedicated to the deities of the underworld by Cupitus Atticianus, Roman, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 59 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Ma 2200.
- Ill. 3. Altar dedicated to Augustus, Roman, 20 BC–AD 37, marble, H.: 148 cm. Musée d’Aquitaine, Bordeaux, inv. no. 60.I.I.



- Ill. 4. Funerary altar dedicated by Valeria Donata to her husband Tiberius Claudius Corinthius and to herself, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 73 cm. British Museum, London, inv. no. 1914.0627.2.
- Ill. 5. Funerary altar of Clodius Blastus, Roman, ca. AD 100–120, marble. Vatican Museums, inv. no. MV.790.0.0.
- Ill. 6. Votive altar dedicated to Cybele by Aulus Flavius Athenio, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 76 cm. Musée Saint-Raymond, Toulouse, inv. no. Ra 220.

Our funerary altar was discovered in May 1861, during the excavation of a Roman villa on the Appian Way in Albanum (present-day Albano Laziale, in Italy). It was found with a cippus bearing the inscription of Publius Novius Symphorus, probably a member of the same house. This discovery is documented in the Catholic review *La Civiltà Cattolica* (“Catholic civilisation” – Ill. 7).

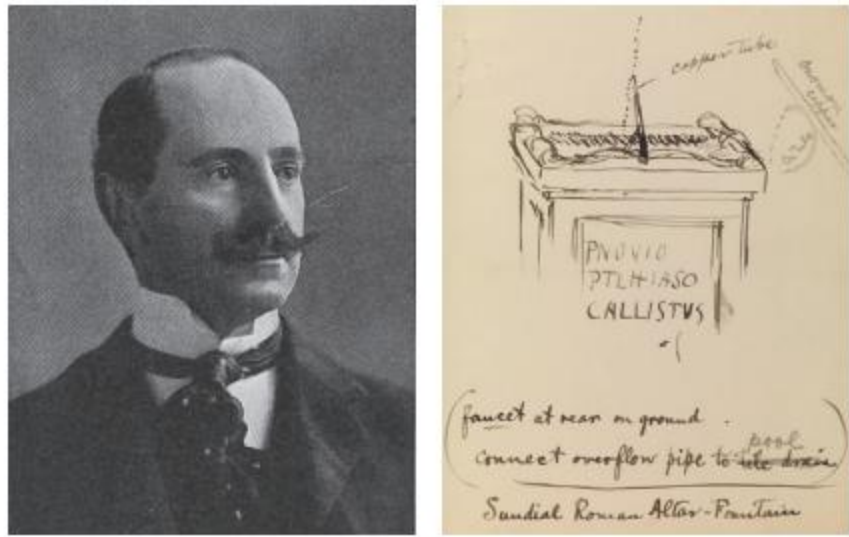


Ill. 7. La Civiltà Cattolica.

Shortly after its discovery, the altar was acquired by Thomas Shields Clarke (1860–1920 – Ill. 8), an American painter and sculptor, who installed it on his property of Fernbrook in Lenox, Massachusetts. In around 1910, Clarke turned the altar into a sundial



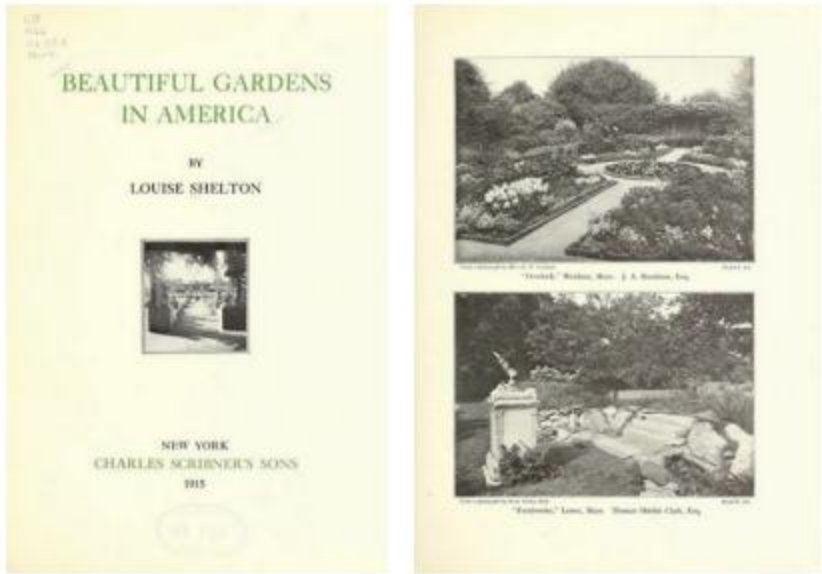
by adding a short Latin inscription on one side: “Sol  
redit. Tempus numquam.” (“The sun returns. Time,  
never.”) A series of photographs and a drawing of  
the altar *in situ* at Fernbrook are preserved at  
the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (Ill.  
9–10). Another photograph of the altar, published  
in Louise Shelton’s work *Beautiful Gardens in  
America*, tells us that it was still in the garden of that  
property in 1915 (Ill. 11). The altar remained there  
until the 1970s, when it was sold by the Bradford  
Auction Gallery in Sheffield, Massachusetts. It was  
then acquired by Lee Elman (1936–2022), the co-  
founder of the music festival of the same name, who  
installed it on his property in Aston Magna, Great  
Barrington, Massachusetts. It stayed there until it  
was passed down by descent. It was then acquired  
in 2023.



Ill. 8. Thomas Shields Clarke (1860–1920).  
Ill. 9. Drawing by Thomas Shields Clarke, “Sundial Roman  
Altar – Fountain”, end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, black ink and graphite  
on cream laid paper, H.: 15.9 cm – W.: 12.7 cm. Pennsylvania  
Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, inv. no. 1985.X.16.



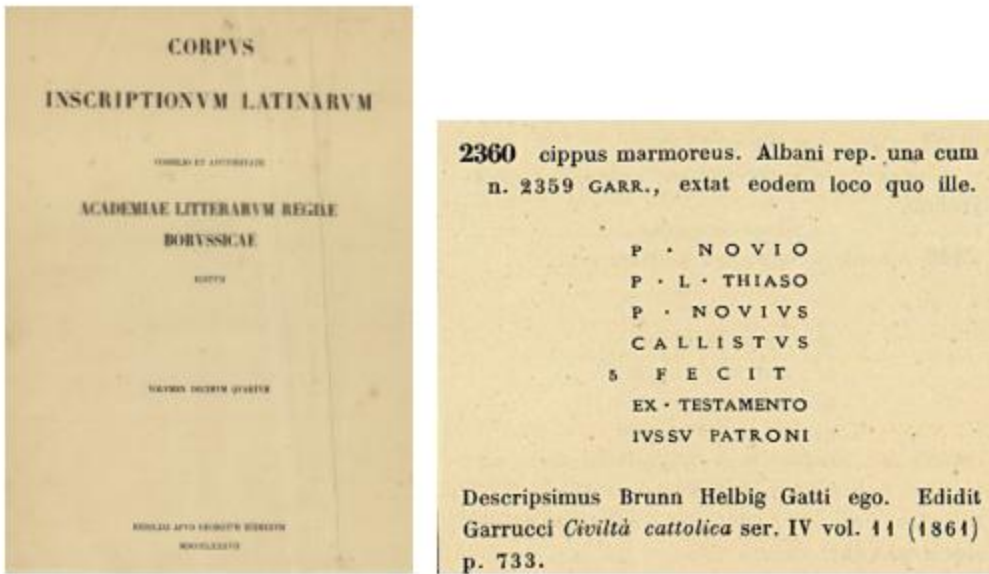
Ill. 10. Autochromes of Thomas Shield Clarke’s garden,  
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.



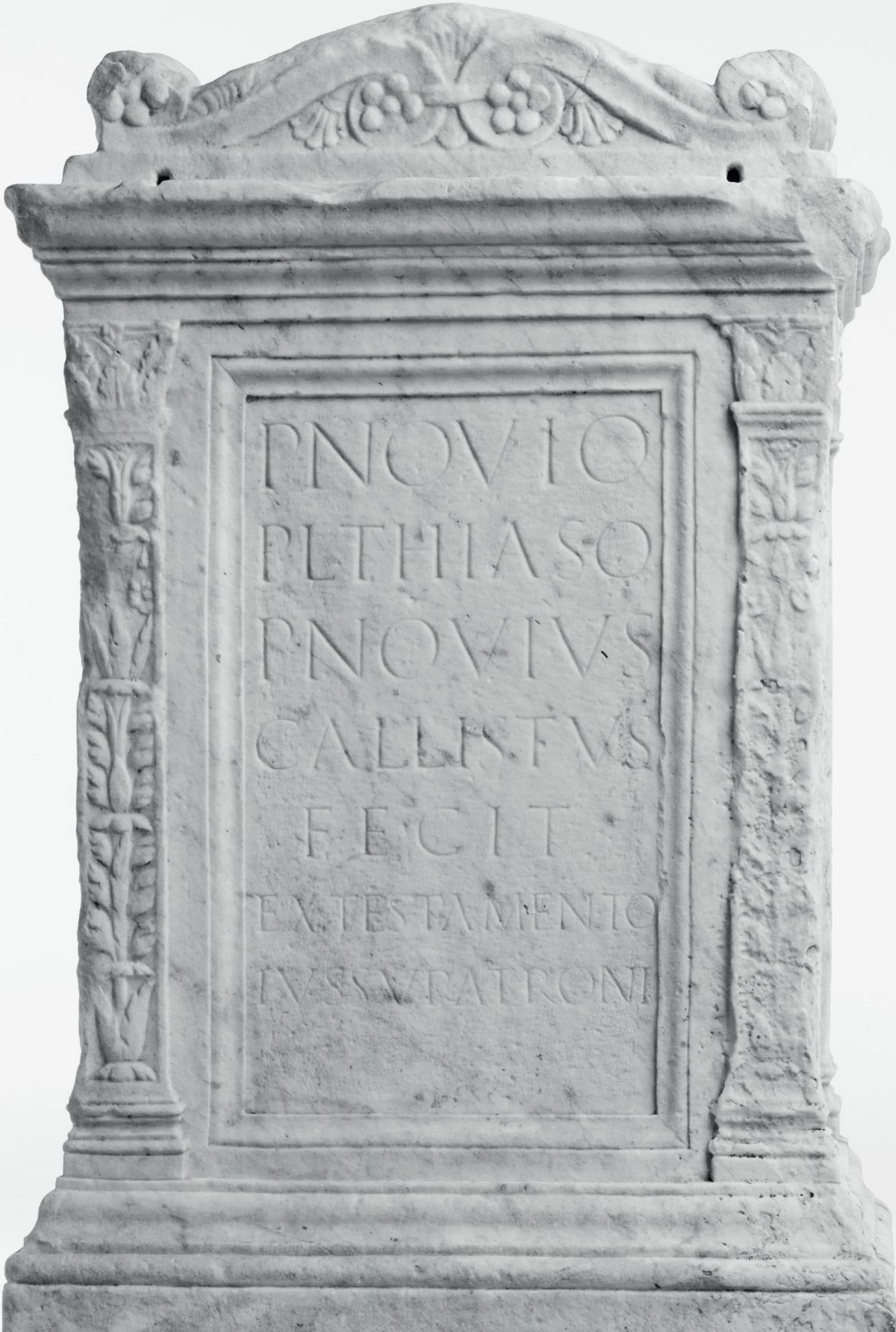
Ill. 11. L. Shelton, *Beautiful Gardens in America*, New York,  
1915, pl. 24.

Publications:

- «Archeologia», La Civiltà Cattolica, twelfth year,  
Vol. XI, Ser. IV, 1861, p. 732.
- H. Dessau, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*,  
Vol. XIV, Berlin, 1887, p. 228, no. 2360.



- L. Shelton, *Beautiful Gardens in America*, New  
York, 1915, pl. 24.







# PORTRAIT OF MARCUS AURELIUS

ROMAN, CIRCA AD 140-160

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 30 CM.	WIDTH: 27 CM.	DEPTH: 30 CM.
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PROVENANCE:

FORMER EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION SINCE THE 17<sup>TH</sup>-18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

BASED ON THE RESTORATION TECHNIQUES.

FORMER FRENCH PRIVATE COLLECTION OF GUSTAVE CLÉMENT-SIMON (1833-1909)

AT HIS RESIDENCE AT CHÂTEAU DE BACH, NAVES, CORRÈZE.

PASSED ON TO GEORGES COUTURON UPON THE SALE OF THE CASTLE AND

HIS ENTIRE COLLECTION IN 1938.

PASSED DOWN WITHIN THE SAME FAMILY THEREAFTER.

This imposing marble head is a portrait of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (AD 121-180). His smooth, round face has a rather small but broad forehead, demarcated by sharply arched eyebrows characteristic of this type of portrait. His protruding eyes are big and round, with thick eyelids that have pronounced contours. His irises are clearly etched and his pupils hollowed out in a crescent shape, lending his gaze a great depth. We may assume that this portrait was intended as a three quarter profile.

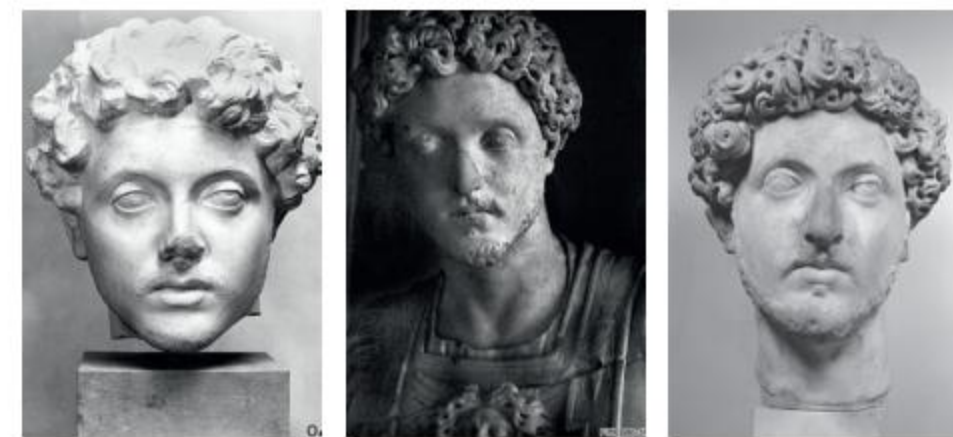
His nose, long and quite large, is straight and strong, rounded at the tip. His nostrils are deeply carved, and the sides of his nose very lifelike in their representation. His mouth is small with thick lips that are very slightly parted, as though to convey the appearance of life. His chin, which is also small, is covered by a wavy beard, the sparseness of which points to his youth. The beard starts at his temples, forming a relatively voluminous strip on each side that ends at his chin. It is finished with a very thin



moustache that joins each side of his mouth before merging with his beard. His hair, composed of big, curly locks, forms a thick, abundant mass that spills out on each side of his head. Each curl was individually sculpted and twists in a different direction. The sculptor's work is so exquisite that even each separate strand of hair seems to have been individually carved. A play of shadow and light arises from the different volumes, created through the use of a drill, which enabled the sculptor to carve the stone deeply. The large mass of hair and the way it was carved, in particularly sharp relief, give the impression it is blowing in the wind. His ears, partly covered by his hair, are rather large and very detailed, in a clear desire to imitate life.

Marcus Aurelius had a particularly well established iconography. He is known to have almost 110 portraits, categorised into four distinct iconographic types. He was the nephew of the emperor Hadrian, adopted by Antoninus Pius on 25 February 138, at nearly 17 years of age. Many portraits of the young Marcus Aurelius were created and disseminated on that very day. Two successive iconographic types quickly emerged, including our portrait, belonging to the second type we know of, the "adolescent type", dated to 140-160/161. It was in that period that he came to power, before becoming emperor in 161 upon the death of Antoninus Pius. Marcus Aurelius was then forty and a new iconographic portrait type came into being, representing him as an older man through infographic devices (full beard, moustache, a slightly different hairstyle and thinner features).

Here, the striking contrast between the very smooth face of the teenage emperor and his unruly beard and hair is particularly noteworthy. The pupils carved in crescent shapes are characteristic of the new type of portrait that appeared in around AD 140. His gaze is thus accentuated, evoking the figure of the philosopher emperor, an iconographic type characteristic of the years of Marcus Aurelius' reign. Marcus Aurelius, who was, himself, a Stoic philosopher, wrote his *Meditations: Thoughts to Myself* at the end of his life. These were, in fact, his thoughts on following the path of philosophy and a rigorist doctrine based on morals and virtue. Portraits of the "adolescent type", which are identical in every way, are conserved in various museums (Ill. 1-6), although the two most significant are the one conserved at the Uffizi Galleries in Florence (Ill. 5) and that found at the Roman villa of Chiragan in the south of France, currently conserved at the Musée Saint Raymond in Toulouse (Ill. 6). Incidentally, these two works gave the adolescent portrait type its name: the "Uffizi-Toulouse" type.



Ill. 1. Portrait of Marcus Aurelius, Roman, ca. AD 140-160/161, marble, H.: 29 cm. Villa Aldobrandini, Frascati, inv. no. 32.

Ill. 2. Portrait of Marcus Aurelius, Roman, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 32 cm. British Museum, London, inv. no. 1873.0820.731.

Ill. 3. Portrait of Marcus Aurelius, Roman, AD 147-151, marble, H.: 37 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. Ma 2258.







Ill. 4. Portrait of Marcus Aurelius, Roman, AD 157-151, marble. Museo archeologico nazionale di Napoli, Naples, inv. no. 6090.

Ill. 5. Portrait of Marcus Aurelius, Roman, AD 139-152, Italian marble, perhaps Apuan, H.: 83,5 cm. Uffizi Galleries, inv. no. 1914 N. 179.

Ill. 6. Portrait of Caesar Marcus Aurelius, Roman, AD 144-147, marble from Göbekli Tepe, Turkey, H.: 78,5 cm. Musée Saint-Raymond, Toulouse, inv. no. Ra 61 a.

Sculpted from white marble with a very fine grain, our head presents a subtle brown patina which attests to the passing of time.

Originally, this astonishing ancient Roman head of Marcus Aurelius was mounted on a composition of various antique elements that had been repurposed, making the artwork a composite piece (Ill. 7). While the head itself is an authentic Roman artifact, the torso and other sculptural elements were assembled from different ancient fragments to create a harmonious and visually complete sculpture. This practice was particularly common from the Renaissance to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when collectors and artists sought to restore and enhance fragmented antiquities by reconstructing them with available pieces. These interventions were meant to revive the grandeur of classical sculptures for display in luxurious private collections.

Our superb bust was part of the collection of the scholar Gustave Clément Simon (1833-1909). A

magistrate by training and the public prosecutor of the court of appeal of Aix en Provence, he acquired Château de Bach in Naves in 1879 and devoted the last thirty years of his life to historical research and amassing a collection within the château (Ill. 8 and 9). His property in Corrèze housed his vast collection of archives, as well as his eclectic collection of artworks, which included an archaeological gallery. In the monograph on the village of Naves published in 1905, Victor Forot mentioned that Gustave Clément Simon “travelled widely (Italy, Greece, Turkey) and brought back artworks, unfortunately uncategorised”. In 1938, the entire collection was sold to Georges Couturon with the château and all its furniture, then passed down within his family.



Ill. 7. Our portrait bust as it was before the restoration.



Ill. 8. Portrait of Gustave Clément-Simon by Alexandre Bertin, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, once in the library at Château de Bach, H.: 171 cm – W.: 105,5 cm.

Musée du Cloître de Tulle André Mazeyrie, Tulle.

Ill. 9. Château de Bach, Naves, Corrèze.









# FRAGMENT OF A SARCOPHAGUS

ROMAN, CIRCA AD 180

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 86.5 CM.

WIDTH: 37 CM.

DEPTH: 15.5 CM.

## PROVENANCE:

FORMER COLLECTION OF GIULIO MONTEVERDE (1837–1917), ROME, BEFORE 1882.

THEN IN THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF NILS EBBESSØN ASTRUP (1901–1972), OSLO,  
ACQUIRED IN THE 1950S OR 1960S ON THE ADVICE OF HANS PETER L'ORANGE (1903–1983),

FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF THE NORWEGIAN INSTITUTE IN ROME.

THEN NORWEGIAN PRIVATE COLLECTION, OSLO, BY DESCENT FROM THE FORMER.

BY DESCENT FROM THE FORMER UNTIL 2024.

This marble fragment of a sarcophagus presents a lively, finely sculpted scene. The relief shows a young man, standing, carrying a krater (a large vase used to mix wine) on his left shoulder and an oenochoe (a wine jug used to serve the wine from the krater) in his right hand. Turned towards his left – the right of the relief – his body is presented in a three-quarter view, while his head is practically in profile. His left arm is raised as though to keep the large vase balanced, while his right arm is lowered, his closed

right hand firmly gripping the handle of the smaller vase, and his right leg is represented over his left. That advanced leg indicates that the young man is likely moving. His face has delicate features and indicates the apparent youth of our figure: his eyes are rather deeply carved and surmounted by thin, arched brow lines, while his full-lipped mouth seems to form a pout. His small, round chin and full cheeks, further characteristics of a youthful appearance in Roman statuary, are accompanied by a small ear that



sticks out from the Phrygian cap crowning his head. Thick, wavy hair spills out from his cap, covering his forehead, framing his ears and spilling elegantly onto the nape of his neck. His wide, smooth neck is partly covered by his pleated garment. The young man is wearing a *chiton* cinched at his waist and a *chlamys* fastened over his right shoulder with a pin. His body is clothed in carefully depicted draperies, rendered by a meticulous carving of the folds of the garments. These folds are of varying depths, sometimes round, sometimes V-shaped. The play of folds also makes it possible to understand the different layers of fabric and thus better understand the garments themselves. In front of our young man, we see a fragment of drapery, most likely from another figure placed in front of him, also moving and going in the same direction. His lively attitude, in combination with the drapery fragment from the missing figure on the right of our relief and the transport of the vases containing liquids, especially wine, indicates that this was probably a Bacchanal scene.

The Bacchanalia were religious festivals dedicated to Bacchus, the god of wine, vines and excess. Originally celebrated in Greece and known as Dionysia, from the name of the god Dionysus, these rites, which lasted between three and five days, were rhythmized with theatrical performances serving as religious ceremonies, fast-paced dances, songs and an excessive consumption of wine. When they were imported to Rome, they took on an even larger dimension, giving rise to nocturnal orgiastic festivities combining alcohol, music and carnal

practices. However, these festivals caused concern in Rome, particularly in 186 BC, when, following a scandal, the Senate banned these practices, which were seen as dangerous for the political and religious life of Rome. The artistic representations of these festivals are varied, but they frequently portray dances and shows of ecstatic devotion in which wine flows freely, as well as mythological figures such as satyrs and exhilarated maenads. In Roman art, these scenes could be viewed in frescoes, mosaics and reliefs, as is the case for our fragment of a sarcophagus.

The marble is sculpted with great precision and the high relief accentuates the liveliness of the scene. The folds of clothing, in artful disarray, are rendered fluidly and realistically, creating a striking contrast with the light and shaded areas of the relief, which accentuates the texture of the fabric and the figure's anatomy. The krater on his shoulder and the smaller vase in his right hand demonstrate great attention to detail, in a way typical of Roman funerary art. A bronze-coloured patina has settled over the surface of the marble over the centuries, complete with brown marks, now integral parts of the work's history.

The young man is depicted in a walking posture, reminiscent of representations of processions, which echoes the Roman practice of using narrative scenes to illustrate the relation between imperial power and subjugated peoples. The Phrygian cap, often associated with barbarians and foreign peoples, lends







credence to this interpretation. The iconography of the figure bearing offerings and wearing that same cap refers to a common motif in Roman art. In this case, it is possible that this young man represents a servant or a subjugated barbarian offering presents to the deceased, which could refer to an act of devotion or, in the imperial context, the notion of submission. An interesting parallel can be drawn with a similar figure on a sarcophagus preserved at the Louvre (Ill. 1). In a panel representing Patroclus' funeral, there is a servant wearing a Phrygian cap and carrying a krater, illustrating a scene of war and peace or, more precisely, a homage to heroes and those in power. The motif of offerings, and particularly those made at funerals, was a recurring theme in Roman funerary art, as it symbolised the respect owed to the deceased and the continuity of their influence after death. The scene on this sarcophagus could thus be interpreted as a symbolic ritual meaning homage or obedience to a superior, possibly the emperor or another person of great importance. Other fragments of sarcophagi depict figures wearing Phrygian caps, but it is rare to see them with the detail of the krater. On another fragment preserved at the Louvre, there is a young man similar to ours, but his hands are free and he seems to be fleeing (Ill. 2). Another example, this time decorating an urn, depicts a servant wearing a draped tunic and a Phrygian cap and carrying a large amphora (Ill. 3).



Ill. 1. Sarcophagus, Roman, ca. AD 190-200, marble, H.: 51 cm.  
Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. Ma 353.

Ill. 2. Fragment of a sarcophagus, Roman, ca. AD 250, Attic workshop, marble, H.: 80.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. Ma 4119.



Ill. 3. Sculpted urn, Greek, Hellenistic, second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, alabaster, H.: 40 cm.  
Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. Ma 2355-1.

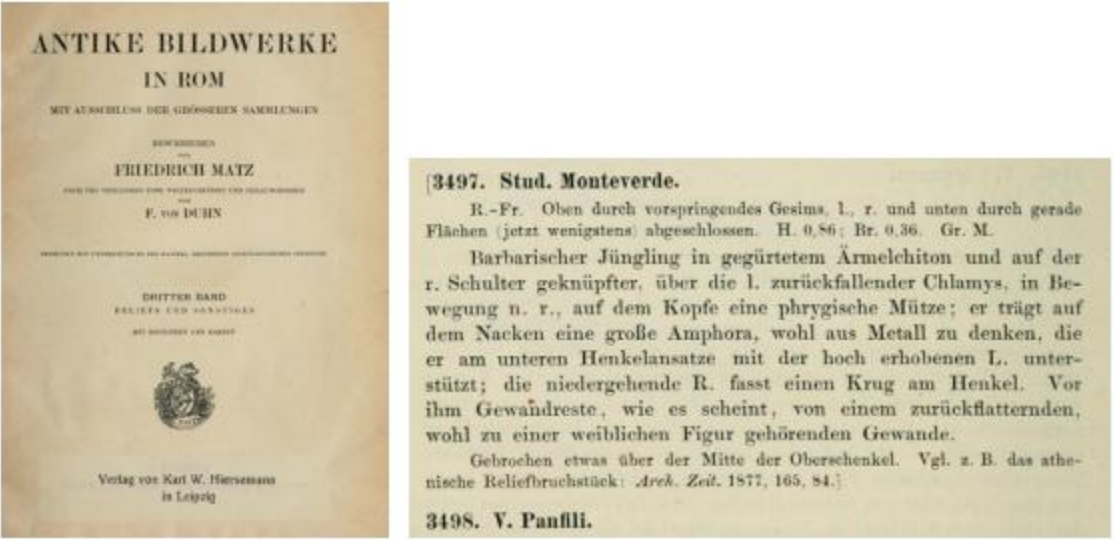
Our fragment of a sarcophagus was once part of the collection of the famous Italian sculptor Giulio Monteverde (1837-1917 - Ill. 4), housed in his residence in Rome and acquired before 1882. It was mentioned as being in his collection in an inventory that Friedrich Matz and Friedrich von Duhn published that year (Ill. 5). Originally from Piemonte, he moved to Rome in 1865 after winning a competition and established his studio and residence in Piazza Indipendenza. Upon Monteverde's death, the work was probably purchased by the Norwegian Institute in Rome, as a photograph acquired by the German Archaeological Institute in 1970 shows our fragment and places it at that location (Ill. 6). The work then passed into the collection of Nils Ebbesson Astrup (1901-1972 - Ill. 7), a Norwegian



shipowner. The latter acquired it for his home in Oslo in the 1950s or 1960s on the advice of Hans Peter L'Orange (1903–1983 – Ill. 8), the founder and director of the Norwegian Institute in Rome. The fragment was then passed down by descent in a private collection in Oslo, was again passed down by descent and, finally, found its way to our collections.



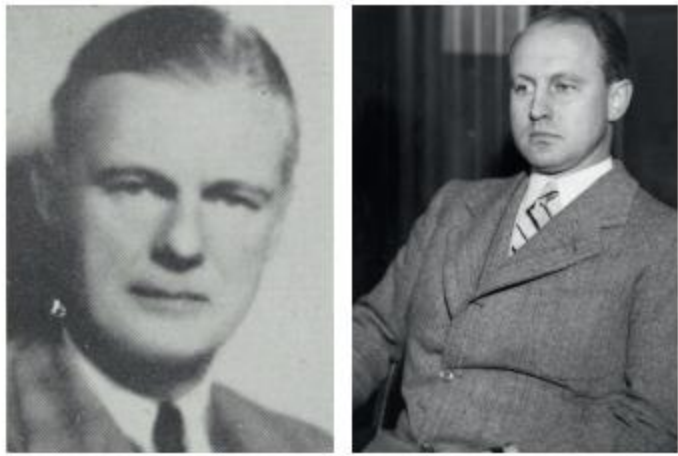
Ill. 4. Self-portrait of Giulio Monteverde (1837–1917).



Ill. 5. Friedrich Matz and Friedrich von Duhn, *Antike Bildwerke in Rom*, Vol. 3, Leipzig, 1882, p. 18, no. 3497.



Ill. 6. Photograph acquired by the German Archaeological Institute in Rome in 1970.



Ill. 7. Nils Ebbesson Astrup (1901–1972).

Ill. 8. Hans Peter L'Orange (1903–1983).

Publications:

- Friedrich Matz and Friedrich v. Duhn, *Antike Bildwerke in Rom*, Vol. 3, Leipzig, 1882, p. 18, no. 3497.
- Kazimierz Bulas, *Les illustrations anciennes de l'Iliade*, Lviv, 1929, p. 99, note 1.
- Guntram Koch and Hellmut Sichtermann, *Römische Sarkophagreliefs* (*Handbuch der Archäologie*), Munich, 1982, p. 130f.
- Rolf M. Schneider, *Bunte Barbaren. Orientalenstatuen aus farbigem Marmor in der römischen Repräsentationskunst*, Worms, 1986, p. 18, note 13.
- Dagmar Grassinger, *Die mythologischen Sarkophagreliefs. Achill bis Amazonen* (*Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs*, Vol. XII.1, Berlin, 1999, p. 208, no. 38, pl. 36.3.
- Rolf M. Schneider, "Barbar", in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum Supplement*, Vol. 1, Stuttgart, 2001, col. 927.
- Andreas Grüner, *Gabe und Geschenk in der römischen Staatskunst*, in Hilmar Klinkott et al., Ed., *Geschenke und Steuern, Zölle und Tribute. Antike Abgabenformen, in Anspruch und Wirklichkeit*, Leiden, 2007, p. 447.







# OIL LAMP

ROMAN, 1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AD

BRONZE INLAID WITH SILVER AND COPPER

HEIGHT: 20 CM.

WIDTH: 13.5 CM.

DEPTH: 30 CM.

PROVENANCE:

EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION SINCE THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

BASED ON THE PATINA AND PRESERVATION

GALERIE DU SYCOMORE, PARIS.

ACQUIRED FROM THE FORMER IN THE 1990S.

This remarkable Roman oil lamp exemplifies the refinement and skill of the bronzesmiths of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Standing on a fine round base, adorned with several concentric circles, this lamp was once fixed to a small candelabra. The hollow, rounded body was used to hold oil and its contours served to keep the wick correctly placed. There is a hole that must once have been closed with a lid, now lost. The long, slim nozzle is adorned with floral motifs that start in the underneath part of the body and end in two semi-volutes, which form the shoulder of the lamp and the contours of the nozzle and separate the nozzle from the body. The acanthus flower that unfurls into these semi-volutes further underscores

that separation. Some details on the underside of the lamp were silver-plated like the leaf-motif inlay at the top. The use of floral motifs, inspired by the Hellenistic ornamental repertory, is typical of decorative Roman pieces from the time of Augustus (27 BC–AD 14). The end of the nozzle is shaped like a half-moon and pierced with a small hole allowing for the insertion of a wick. Opposite the nozzle, the handle is a spectacular, refined piece of sculpture. It is formed by a stalk adorned with several leaves in relief that lead to a lion leaping from the petals of a flower. The lion is strikingly lifelike, its head and flexed front paws emerging majestically. Its gaze is directed upwards and its tongue and teeth can be



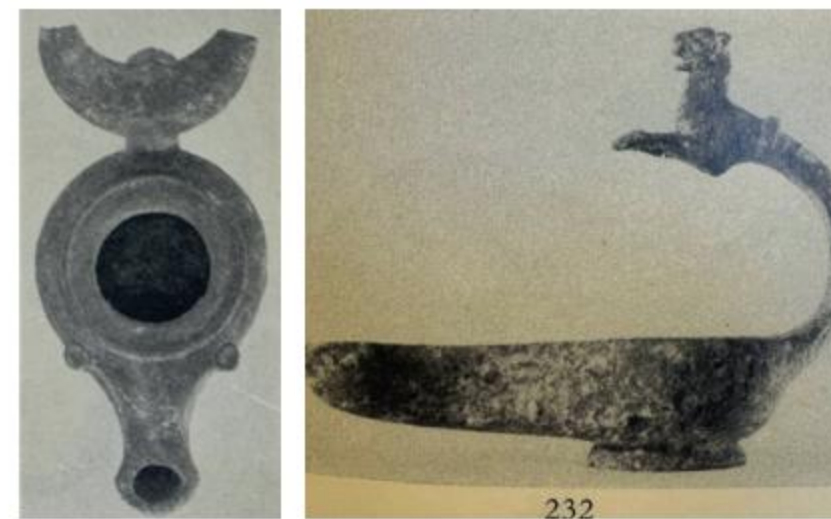
seen in its open mouth. Its dark, patinated mane dances with rippling reflections, as though it were moving. The lion's face is highly expressive. It is further embellished with silver details for the eyes and teeth, while the tongue is accented with copper. The deep patina on our lamp, with its red and brown tones, tells of centuries passed, as well as time spent in various collections. There is a touch of purple under the foot. Each detail reveals a deliberate artistic intention, combining expressiveness, realism and subtle plays of light and matter.

Our lamp elegantly illustrates ancient Romans' penchant for sophisticated everyday objects, which could play a more ostentatious role, as this oil lamp did. A source of radiance created to produce light, it could have been used in the domus (home). Considering the elegance, elaborate ornamentation and silver detailing of our lamp, it is very likely that it was intended for special occasions, set upon a ceremonial table, for banquets in the triclinium or meetings in the vestibulum.

Siegfried Loeschke, a German archaeologist from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, developed a classification of Roman ceramic oil lamps. His reference work *Die lampen aus den kerameikos* ("Ceramic lamps" – 1919) is still considered a major contribution to their study. Our lamp seems to fall within sub-type Loeschke XIX A, described as having a very low, ring foot; "the body is spherical, generally quite high"; "the discus has two lateral round appendages at the point where the reservoir

is attached, and the sides of the latter descend like those of a narrow funnel or chalice and join under the nozzle".

Our lamp is similar to some examples preserved at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. First is a lamp of the same type as ours, which presents similar characteristics: a low foot, a rounded body and two semi-volutes that form the shoulder (Ill. 1). A second comparable lamp displays a leaping animal in an analogous composition. The representation of a lion or panther, front legs outstretched, resembles our lion. Behind the feline, we also see small petals that form a corona – a similar concept (Ill. 2).



Ill.1. Oil lamp, circa 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, bronze. Museo archeologico nazionale di Napoli, inv. no.72127.

Ill.2. Oil lamp, circa 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, bronze. Museo archeologico nazionale di Napoli, inv. no.72395

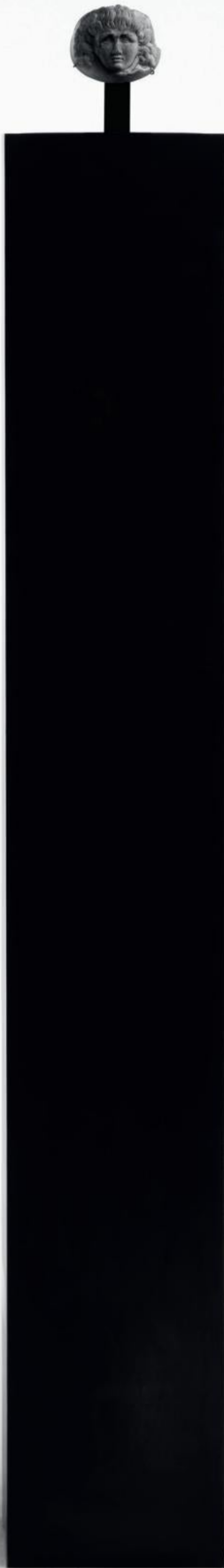
This wonderful lamp is certainly coming from a very old European collection. This level of patination and weathering can only be formed by centuries. Unfortunately we have not yet retraced its full history but it must be hidden somewhere. More recently it was sold in the 1990s by the Galerie du Sycomore in Paris, which specialised in archaeological works, and remained in the collection to which it was subsequently added.











# CAMEO OF MEDUSA

ROMAN, 1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AD

BROWN, TWO-LAYERED AGATE

HEIGHT: 6.8 CM.

WIDTH: 8.3 CM.

DEPTH: 4 CM.

## PROVENANCE:

FOUND IN THE TIBER IN ROME IN 1886.

FORMERLY IN THE COLLECTION OF SIR JOHN EVANS (1823–1908), LONDON.

THEN IN AN ENGLISH COLLECTION UNTIL THE 2000S.

IN THE FRENCH COLLECTION OF GUY LADRIÈRE UNTIL 2024.

This Roman cameo from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD is a remarkable demonstration of the refinement achieved by ancient glyptics. Sculpted from a two-layered brown agate, it represents the head of Medusa, an emblematic figure of Graeco-Roman mythology. Far from the monstrous image of archaic tales, this Medusa is in line with a Roman iconographic tradition that viewed her as a tragic, quasi-divine figure. Centred on the face of Medusa, our cameo was crafted with a remarkable delicacy. The features of the Gorgon are meticulously sculpted, endowing her with an almost androgynous beauty. Her oval face is dominated by a wide forehead, partly covered by bountiful hair. Her

slightly arched eyebrows overhang almond-shaped eyes, their drooping, deeply carved eyelids creating a subtle play of light and shadow. Her dramatic, fixed gaze gives her an enigmatic, melancholy aura. Her straight nose, which flares out slightly at the bottom, is conical in shape. Her mouth is small, clearly outlined and with full, parted lips. Her hair is of great ornamental richness. The wavy locks spread out around her face with a certain exuberance, giving the piece a subtle impression of movement. Among these waves are a few serpentine shapes, a discreet but essential reference to the Gorgon's nature. A lock of snake-shaped hair on either side of her face, characteristic of Medusa, follows its contours,



both locks joining in a knot under her chin.

The brown, two-layered agate was exploited with a remarkable virtuosity. This stone, valued for its natural hues, enabled the sculptor to play with the contrasts between the layers to bring out the sculpted motifs. In this cameo, the top layer, in a lighter tone, was carefully carved to form Medusa's figure, while the darker, bottom layer serves as the background, thereby accentuating the effects of relief and depth. Cameos are crafted by carving a low relief with abrasive tools, which requires extreme precision.

The choice of Medusa for the motif was in no way meaningless. In Graeco-Roman antiquity, the Gorgon was seen not only as a monstrous creature, but also as a protective figure. Her image was frequently used for apotropaic purposes. This cameo would thus not have had only an aesthetic value, but also a symbolic meaning, bestowing a magical protection upon its owner. The myth of Medusa, popularised by Ovid, in particular, recounts that Athena, offended by the union of Poseidon and Medusa in her temple, transformed the latter into a fearsome creature with a petrifying gaze. Perseus, with the aid of a reflective shield, managed to slay Medusa and offered Athena her head, whereupon the goddess affixed it to her aegis as a talisman. Thereafter, Medusa's image became a recurring motif in ancient art. Her iconography evolved over time: while ancient representations emphasised her frightening aspect, with a grimacing face and threatening fangs, the Hellenistic and Roman periods softened her features. Medusa became a

melancholic, idealised figure, only her serpentine hair and fixed gaze left to recall her terrifying nature.

This cameo, by the quality of its execution and the preciousness of its material, was an object of prestige. It could have served as jewellery or been preserved as a precious object, but its relatively imposing dimensions suggest another function. Small cameos were thus often used for rings. There are several such cameos that represent Medusa in profile, including that of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Ill. 1) and that preserved in the collections of the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rennes (Ill. 2). A third example, found among the Treasure of Petescia, Italy, and preserved at the Altes Museum in Berlin (Ill. 3), also illustrates that trend. These small cameos, adapted to jewellery, had a limited apotropaic impact, as the Gorgon was represented in profile. However, there are exceptions such as the magnificent cameo with a frontal view of Medusa preserved at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (Ill. 4).



Ill.1. Cameo disk with Medusa head, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, glass, H.: 2,5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.  
Ill.2. Cameo, head of Medusa, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, chalcedony, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rennes.  
Ill.3. Cameo ring featuring the head of Medusa, Roman, 50 BC-AD 20, sardonyx. Treasure of Petescia, Italy. Altes Museum, Berlin.





Ill.4. Cameo, Roman, imperial period, 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, onyx, H.: 5,5 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Conversely, our large cameo seems to correspond rather to a phalera, an ornament intended to be affixed to a cuirass or harness. Phaleras had a dual function: they exalted military prestige and provided a symbolic protection through the frontal depiction of Medusa. The hypothesis our cameo was used as a phalera is supported by the chalcedony bust of Trajan, which features a cuirass pierced so precious stones could be inserted (Ill. 5). This ornamental technique was common for military equipment and was used in triumphal parades to honour the soldiers (Ill. 6). An other example is a piece preserved at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Lyon (Ill. 7).

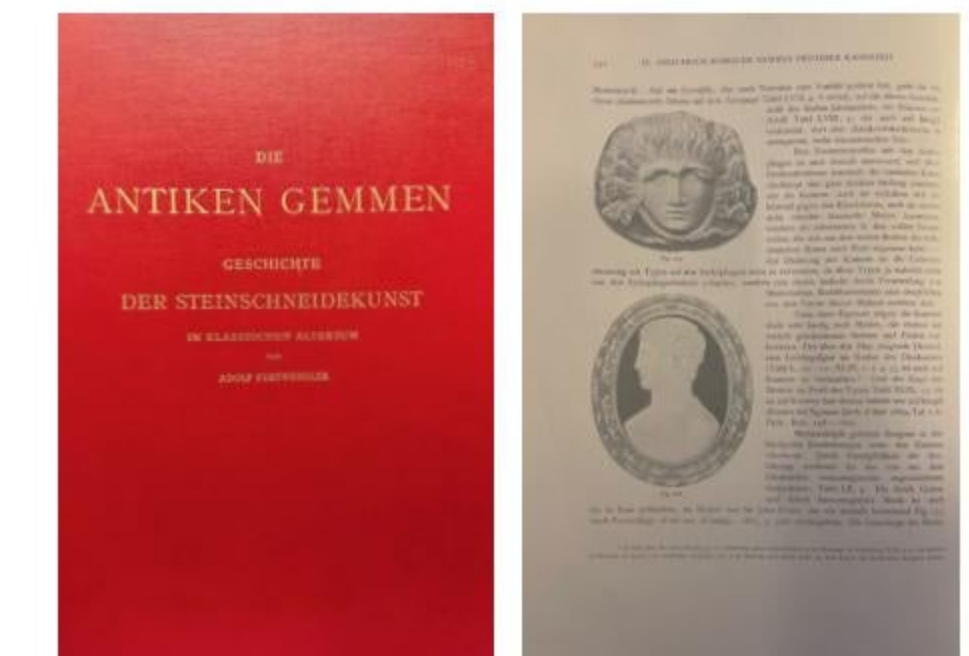


Ill.5. Bust of Trajan with perforations for phaleras, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, chalcedony, Antikensammlung, Berlin, inv. no. 1979.5.

Ill.6. Reconstitution of the phaleras, Treasure of Lauersfort, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

Ill.7. Phalera depicting Medusa, Roman, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, chalcedony, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon, inv. no. SN 256.

Our cameo was found in the Tiber in Rome in 1886 and acquired by Sir John Evans (1823-1908), as indicated by Adolf Furtwängler's work (Ill. 8), which has an illustration of our cameo in Figure 175. Sir John Evans, an eminent British archaeologist, geologist and numismatist, was one of the greatest collectors and researchers of his time. In 1927, part of his collection, as well as his research documents, was given to the Ashmolean Museum by his son, Sir Arthur Evans. The cameo then joined an English collection until the 2000s, when it was added to the collection of Guy Ladrière, an eminent French collector specialising in the art of glyptics, until 2024 (Ill. 9).



Ill.8. Adolf Furtwängler, *Die Antiken Gemmen, Geschichte der Steinschneidekunst in Klassischen Altertum*, 1900.



Ill.9 D. Scarisbrick, C. Wagner, J. Boardman, *The Guy Ladrière Collection of Gems and Rings*, 2016.





# OLPE VASE

ROMAN, 1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY BC – 1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AD

BRONZE

HEIGHT: 16.5 CM.

WIDTH: 9.5 CM.

DEPTH: 9.5 CM.

PROVENANCE:

FORMER COLLECTION OF ARTHUR SAMBON, PARIS.

SOLD BY GALERIE GEORGES PETIT, PARIS, IN MAY 1914 AS LOT 53.

THEN IN A PARISIAN PRIVATE COLLECTION, ACQUIRED IN THE 1970S.

THEREAFTER, PASSED DOWN BY DESCENT.

This bronze vase, unique in its adornments, was produced in Rome between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

Due to its small size, it is classified as an olpe. More specifically, it is a piriform or pear-shaped olpe. Its round mouth is accentuated by ridges that encircle the upper part of the vessel. The neck is further adorned with finely sculpted twin duck heads, one on either side of the handle. The latter, the true focal point of the composition, was meticulously wrought. Tall and in the shape of a crook, it begins at the neck with a scene in high relief representing an eagle battling a snake, located to its right. The hooked beak, relief plumage, exquisitely detailed

wings and sharp claws attest to the virtuosity of the artist. These motifs could have a symbolic meaning linked to victory, a common theme in Roman iconography. The handle is prolonged by foliate motifs reminiscent of acanthus leaves, an explicit reference to the Corinthian decorative repertory, highly valued in antiquity. These plants are framed by two incisions that delineate the decoration. The handle ends in the finely sculpted bust of a young satyr. The traits of the mythological figure such as his pointy ears, incised locks that animate his hair and drapery fastened over his right shoulder with a fibula show great attention to detail. The hair of our young satyr was meticulously depicted: each lock is



separated from the others by incisions that give his hair an appearance of movement. The ovoid body tapers into an annular foot that stabilises the piece. Our olpe is particularly well preserved, with slight accretions on its body. Its green patina, characteristic of antique bronze, reveals not only the age of the object, but also its exposure to the air and humidity. We note that it is an old collection patina, with a deep, intense colour.

Originating in Greek tradition, olpai were utilitarian vessels used to transport and serve liquids such as wine and oil. These substances played a central role in Roman life, particularly at banquets and religious ceremonies and in funerary rites. The pear shape and curved handle of our olpe lend it a distinct elegance, as does its sumptuous ornamentation, which suggests that it was used in an aristocratic or sacred context. Our olpe was thus both decorative and utilitarian. The choice of bronze for its material is significant. As a copper and tin alloy, it is very resistant to corrosion, making it possible for such vases to endure for centuries while retaining their original beauty.



Ill.1. Olpe, Etruscan, 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, bronze, H.: 12.5 cm.  
British Museum, London.  
Ill.2. Olpe, Hellenistic, end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, bronze,  
H.: 21 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.  
Ill.3. Jug, Roman, imperial period, bronze, H.: 19.3 cm.  
Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Similar examples can be found in several prestigious collections. The olpe preserved at the British Museum (Ill. 1) presents a pear shape with a crook-shaped handle, although in a plainer style, particularly with regard to its decoration. The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston houses another olpe (Ill. 2), with a handle decorated with goat heads, although that handle goes no higher than the neck. Our vase also shares significant similarities with two works preserved at the Louvre. The first (Ill. 3) is characterised by an ovoid body, circular mouth and tall handle – formal characteristics that are similar to those of our vase. The second (Ill. 4) displays these same elements, but its handle is richly adorned with leaves, a palmette and a head of Attis. Furthermore, ridges that encircle the neck, similar to those of our olpe, enhance the composition of the piece. Another pair of olpai belonging to a private collection (Ill. 5) present a striking resemblance with our vase, both in their overall shape and in their carefully crafted decoration.



Ill.4. Oenochoe with a round mouth, Roman, imperial period,  
bronze, H.: 21.8 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.  
Ill.5. Pair of olpai, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, bronze, H.: 20 cm.  
Private collection.



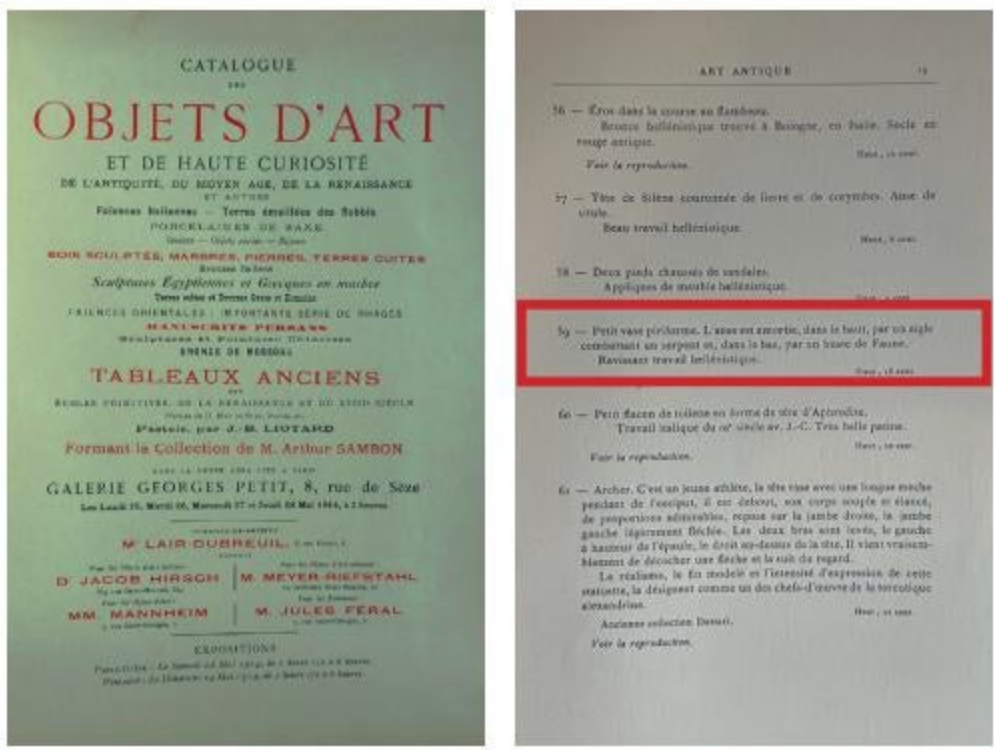




This piece once belonged to Arthur Sambon (Ill. 6), an art expert and antiquarian who was of some renown at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Born into a family of expert antiquarians that could trace its lineage to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Arthur Sambon was the son of Jules Sambon, a numismatist and art dealer. He played a key role in the art world by serving as president of the Chamber of Art Experts in Paris and founder of the International Chamber of Art Experts. The sales catalogue for his collection, published in 1914 (Ill. 7), designates our vase as lot 53. Sold to Galerie Georges Petit in Paris in May 1914, it then joined a Parisian private collection in the 1970s, before being passed down by descent.



Ill.6. Portrait of Arthur Sambon.



Ill.7. Catalogue des objets d'art et de haute curiosité de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Âge, de la Renaissance et autres... formant la collection de M. Arthur Sambon, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 1914, p.19.









# STATUE OF ASCLEPIUS

ROMAN, 1<sup>ST</sup> - 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY AD

MARBLE

HEIGHT: 90 CM.

WIDTH: 44 CM.

DEPTH: 23 CM.

PROVENANCE:

FORMERLY IN THE BARBERINI COLLECTION, ROME.

THEN IN THE SCIARRA COLLECTION, ROME.

IN DON MASSARENTI'S COLLECTION, ROME, EXHIBITED AT THE PALAZZO ACCORAMBONI.

HIS COLLECTION WAS SOLD IN 1894.

ACQUIRED BY HENRY WALTERS, BALTIMORE, IN THE ABOVEMENTIONED SALE.

BEQUEATHED TO THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM BY HENRY WALTERS IN 1931.

THEN IN THE COLLECTION OF ROBERT E. BARTOS AND SHARON BARTOS, AS PART OF

THEIR ESTATE, PUERTO RICO.

This majestic Roman torso represents Asclepius – known to the Greeks as Asklepios – the god of medicine and healing, worshipped throughout the ancient world. He is depicted standing, wearing a large drapery that envelops his lower body while revealing a torso sculpted with impressive precision. The god's exquisitely detailed musculature attests to an exceptional knowledge of human anatomy. The posture adopted by the deity follows the principle of *contrapposto*, a sculptural technique that balances the weight of the body between a bent leg and a

weight-bearing leg, in this case, the left, creating an illusion of movement. This arrangement gives the statue an impression of vitality and flexibility, reinforced by the slight slope of the shoulders in contrast with that of the hips. This compositional scheme was inherited from Greek aesthetic canons and once more taken up in the Renaissance in a quest for artistic perfection. Asclepius is wearing a *himation*, a heavy mantle traditionally worn by men in antiquity. The garment is artfully draped over his left shoulder before twining smoothly around his



waist, creating a subtle play of volumes and folds. The latter, finely chiselled, translate the fluidity of the fabric while simultaneously showcasing the god's underlying musculature. The alternating areas of deep folds and shallower folds accentuate the impression of movement and animate the surface of the sculpture, while playing on the contrast between light and shadow. The garment seems to breathe and move around him in an entanglement of deeper and shallower folds, creating a spectacular visual effect. The deity's left arm is folded back, further animating his posture and enhancing the portrayal of the draperies. This position could hint at the fact he was originally holding his main attribute: a staff around which a snake is coiled, the symbol of medicine and healing. This motif is still a powerful emblem in the medical field, used to this day and known as the rod or staff of Asclepius. At the back of our Asclepius, some distinct folds indicate the thick draping of the himation, through which we can discern the shape of the god's folded arm, as well as his hand, which was probably clenched in a fist at the small of his back.

This piece, is a perfect example of the influence the Greek masters had on Roman sculptors. Each anatomical detail and fold of fabric seems to translate an unending quest for harmony, passed down by the aesthetic canons of Polykleitos and the sculptors of his time. Incidentally, the work is sculpted from a particularly fine white marble, which catches the light and reveals every detail in a striking clarity. The whole piece is enhanced by a warm-hued patina,

attesting to the effects of the passing of time on our statue.

This sculpture immortalises Asclepius, son of Apollo and the mortal Coronis, in his characteristic posture – standing, enveloped in a *himation* and holding his staff – the very symbol of wisdom and healing. His story, marked by his mastery of the medical arts, is tragic. Betrayed by Coronis, Apollo ripped Asclepius from his mother's womb before killing her. He then entrusted the newborn to Chiron, who taught him the healing arts. Envied by Hades, god of the underworld, who feared that he would make human beings immortal, Asclepius was struck down by one of Zeus' lightning bolts. However, his cult traversed the ages, leaving its mark upon Roman society as a powerful symbol of healing. Known models of sculptures dating from the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD show Asclepius in this very attitude (Ill. 1). A torso similar to our sculpture in its dimensions and quality is preserved at the Capitoline Museums (Ill. 2).



Ill. 1. Statuette of Asclepius, Roman, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 53 cm. Musée Saint-Raymond, Toulouse, inv. no. Ra 364.

Ill. 2. Asclepius, Roman, 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, marble, H.: 125 cm. Capitoline Museums, Rome, inv. no. 2267.







A whole example can also be seen at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens (Ill. 3). Sometimes, a small figure wearing a hooded cape is represented beside Asclepius: this is Telesphorus, his assistant, who saw to the convalescence of their patients (Ill. 4).



Ill. 3. Asclepius, Roman, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, marble, National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Room 32.

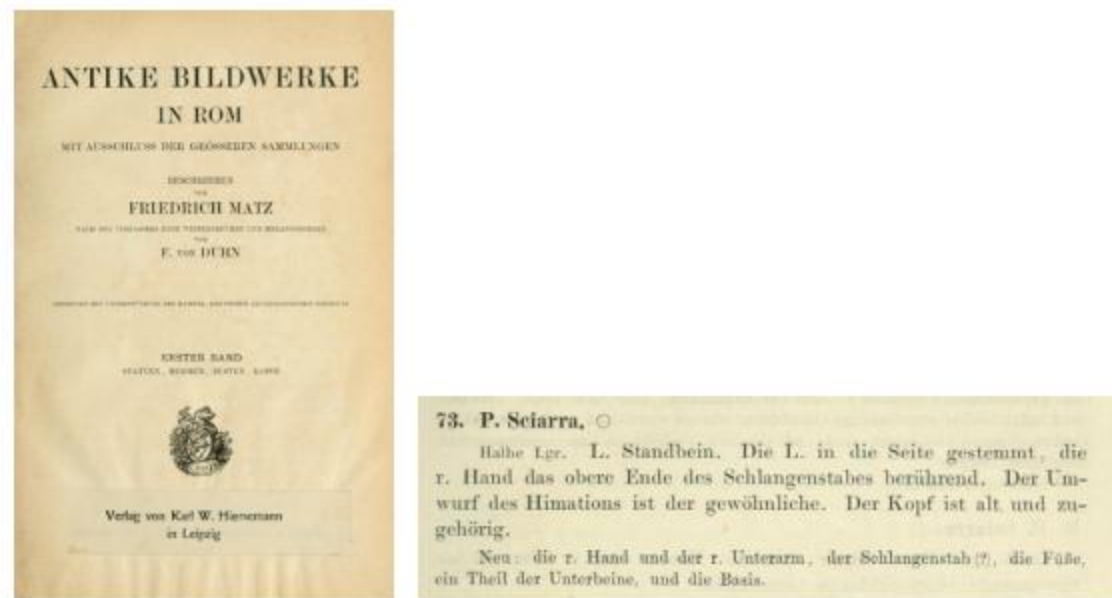
Ill. 4. Asclepius and Telesphorus, Roman, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, marble, H: 65 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

From the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, the benevolent deity was particularly worshipped in Delphi and Athens, especially after the pest of 430–429 BC. Thereafter, schools of medicine were built near temples dedicated to Asclepius. The most famous was the temple in Epidaurus, but another temple-hospital was established in Athens in 420 BC. These sanctuaries owed their renown to the Asclepiads, healer-priests trained in the art of healing, who worked there. Patients who sought healing would bring offerings to Asclepius. Æsculapian snakes, considered holy animals, were housed in the temple-hospitals to promote patients' recovery. The symbolism of snakes has thus always been associated with the idea of life and death, from archaic societies. During the

Hellenistic period, the cult of Asclepius was highly successful all around the Mediterranean, and particularly in the Roman world. It is told that, to curb an uncontrollable epidemic, Romans brought the god Asclepius from Epidaurus to Rome in the form of a gigantic snake, which immediately put an end to the scourge. From the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, he was known as the father of new healing goddesses such as Hygeia, goddess of health.

Our statue was originally part of the illustrious Barberini collection. This prestigious Roman collection, accumulated by one of the most influent aristocratic families in Italy, included many ancient masterpieces that were exhibited at the Palazzo Barberini in Rome and is still a major reference in the art world. Over generations, the Barberini family divided into several branches, one of which assumed the name of Sciarra. This name came from Carlo Barberini (1630–1704), son of Prince Taddeo Barberini, who inherited the title of Prince of Palestrina and founded the Barberini-Sciarra line. The name Sciarra was already associated with an old Roman noble family, from whom the Barberini had inherited titles and properties following matrimonial alliances and successions. The branch progressively acquired a certain autonomy from the main Barberini line, all while retaining their immense collection of artworks and antiquities. Our Asclepius is, incidentally, listed as no. 73 in Friedrich Matz and Friedrich von Duhn's work *Antike Bildwerke in Rom* (Ill. 5).



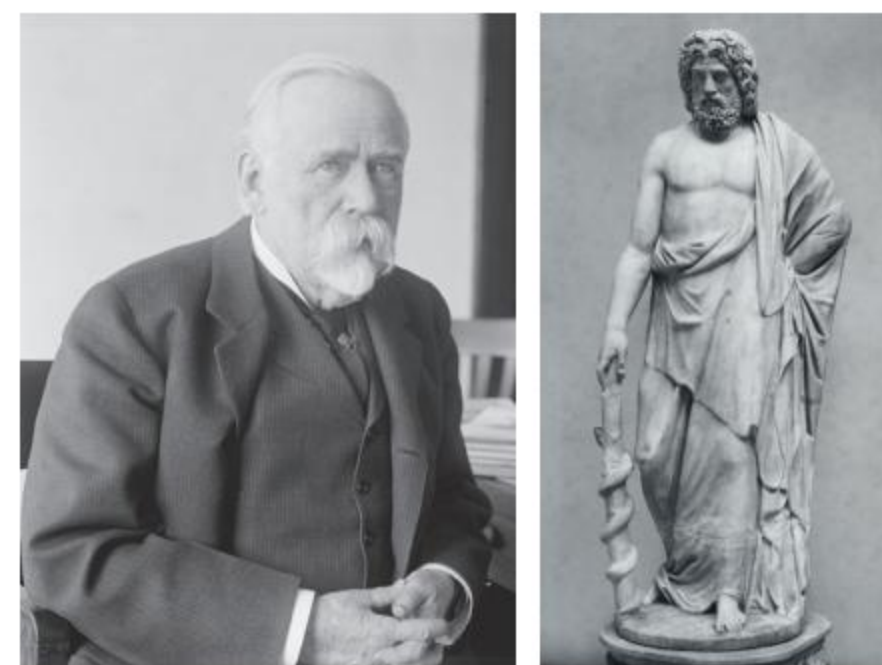


Ill. 5. Friedrich Matz and Friedrich von Duhn, *Antike Bildwerke in Rom* (“Ancient sculptures in Rome”), no. 73.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when Italy’s eminent aristocratic families were experiencing great financial decline and the Risorgimento (the unification of Italy) was causing political turmoil, the Barberini-Sciarra had to sell part of their collection, thus precipitating a great number of ancient works onto the art market. This dispersion enabled many private collectors and institutions to acquire works from the prestigious collection. It was during that time that our statue was acquired by Don Marcello Massarenti, a Vatican official and Almoner of the Pope under Pius IX. Massarenti, who had helped the Pope to flee Rome during the 1849 uprising, travelled widely in the course of his duties and profited from those opportunities to accumulate an impressive collection of Italian paintings and Roman sculptures. To exhibit his acquisitions, Massarenti rented space at the Palazzo Accoramboni in Rome, where our Asclepius was exhibited with other ancient sculptures, busts and sarcophagi (Ill. 6). In 1881, he published a first sales catalogue, followed, in 1894, by a second English edition, intended to attract a public of international buyers. Our statue featured in the second catalogue, described as “Æsculapius.

Greek statue representing the god with the usual allegorical signs”.

It was not, however, until 1902 that the collection was actually dispersed. That year, the railway magnate Henry Walters (1848–1931 – Ill. 7), a great collector based in Baltimore, Maryland, acquired a significant portion of the Massarenti collection – 1,700 pieces, in fact – including paintings, bronzes from the Renaissance, Greek vases and Roman antiquities. These works formed the basis for the future Walters Art Museum, which opened its doors to the public in 1934, three years after Walters’ death. The statue of Asclepius was studied several times within the Walters Art Museum, where it underwent restorations. It is specified in the museum’s archives that some parts had been restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – the bottom of the drapery, the feet, the base and a section of the staff. Moreover, the head that can be seen in some old photographs was a painted plaster addition from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was later disassembled for reasons of historical consistency (Ill. 8).



Ill. 7. Henry Walters (1848–1931).

Ill. 8. Our statue as it was exhibited at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.





Finally, our work left the museum's collections to join that of Robert Bartos, a former colonel in the US army who died in 2017. In the 1980s, after having retired, Bartos and his wife Sharon Bartos, an ex-member of the US Congress, opened an antiquities gallery called El Alcazar in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where our statue was exhibited. The fascinating journey of our Asclepius shows the extent to which our statue is a priceless treasure, bearing a history as rich as that of the god it represents. This torso is not only a work of art, but also the vestige of a past in which medicine, religion and art combine. It is an admirable piece, full of life and history, which continues to inspire to this day.



III. 6. View of the room where our statue was exhibited at the Palazzo Accoramboni, Rome (near the Vatican).





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